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The White Shield

Myrtle Reed

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1. Fiction, American

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BY MYRTLE REED

LOVE LETTERS OF A MUSICIAN
LATER LOVE LETTERS OF A MUSICIAN
THE SPINSTER BOOK
LAVENDER AND OLD LACE
PICKABACK SONGS
THE SHADOW OF VICTORY
THE MASTER'S VIOLIN
THE BOOK OF CLEVER BEASTS
AT THE SIGN OF THE JACK-O'-LANTERN
A SPINNER IN THE SUN
LOVE AFFAIRS OF LITERARY MEN
FLOWER OF THE DUSK
OLD ROSE AND SILVER
SONNETS TO A LOVER
MASTER OF THE VINEYARD
A WEAVER OF DREAMS
THE MYRTLE REED YEAR BOOK
THE WHITE SHIELD

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[illegible]TLE REED

"Pardon me, but can you tell me whose pictures these are?"

From the Drawing by Dalton Stevens.

(page 5)

[illegible]ONS BY DALTON STEVENS

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
New York and London
The Knickerbocker Press
1912

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"Pardon me, but can you tell me whose pictures these are?"

From the Drawing by Dalton Stevens.

(page 2)

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THE WHITE SHIELD

STORIES BY

MYRTLE REED

ILLUSTRATIONS BY DALTON STEVENS

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
New York and London
The Knickerbocker Press
1912

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ELIZABETH A. REED

The Knickerbocker Press, New York

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The Editor desires to make acknowledgment to the publishers of the following magazines for their courtesy in permitting the use of certain stories in this collection: *Munsey's Magazine, The New England Magazine, The Pilgrim, The Smart Set, The Woman's Magazine, The National Magazine, Outing.*

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Preface

THE editor takes great pleasure in being able to give to the public another volume from the pen of the lamented author—Myrtle Reed. These fascinating bits of fiction reflect the characteristics of the writer; the same vivid imagination, the quick transition from pathos to humour, the facility of utterance, the wholesome sentiment, the purity of thought, the delicacy of touch, the spontaneous wit which endeared her to friends and to thousands of readers, not only in Europe and America, but also in Australia and South Africa, are here fully represented.

Her mission was largely one of comfort to the suffering and the sorrowing; letters of good cheer went to far-away countries where her personal ministry could reach in no other way, and her writings are rich with sympathy and hope which have poured the oil of gladness into many a wounded spirit.

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Pathos is not sadness, but it is rather the sunshine gleaming through a passing cloud, and hence the writings of Myrtle Reed are illumined with the gladsome light of unfailing love. Not only in her books and in letters to troubled souls, but also in her personal records, we find the unfading lines of a deeply devotional nature which was sacredly guarded from the careless observer and seldom discussed even with friends. But in this abiding faith was rooted the brave loyalty and high purpose which not only characterised herself, but also all of her productions.

The beautiful stories here presented have given pleasure to thousands of readers in the magazines in which they first came into print, and it is to the unvarying courtesy of the publishers that we are indebted for the privilege of thus binding the scattered grain into a single golden sheaf.

For the many letters of sincere sympathy which, in response to a formal request, have come from these stranger-friends, the editor is especially grateful.

ELIZABETH A. REED.

CHICAGO, February, 1912.

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Morning

By Myrtle Reed

The magic East lies in enchanted shadow—
A Titan dreaming fitfully of day,
The ghostly mists are deep upon the meadow
Outlined against the hillside faintly grey;
The portent of the dawn has strangely swayed
The silver birches, trembling and afraid.
Too long the hosts of Dark have held the plain,
The King of Night at last must end his reign;
With rapturous accord doth earth acclaim
The tidings of new life for heart and brain,
Behold the night hath passed away in flame!

Sea-born and strong, the winds begin to blow
Against the cliffs, the billows break in spray;
Returning waters meet and overflow—
White-plumed battalions marshalled for the fray;
Upon the beach the foaming cavalcade
Beats yet once more with rhythmic cannonade.

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Morning

Afar the boundless reaches of the main
Show lines of white that fall and rise again,
A morning song the sea's lips soon shall frame,
Insistent and with passionate refrain,
Behold the night hath passed away in flame!
Athwart the sombre East there comes a glow—
A thrill, a tremble, then a slender ray,
A single arrow from the sun-god's bow
Strikes on the zenith like a star astray;
Swiftly does the light of Venus fade,
Her gentle radiance for the night was made.
The distant hills take on a crimson stain
From fire-poppies set in golden grain
That wrought of light puts harvest fields to shame;
Through feathery clouds there creeps a scarlet vein,
Behold the night hath passed away in flame!

The ramparts of the sunrise glorious grow,
Of what lost rubies builded, none may say,
What diamonds snatched from sunbeams or from snow—
What emeralds and violets lost by May
In those far off celestial walls are laid!
Imperial columns of jacinth and of jade,
Like dreamer's castles built in sunny Spain,
Before these jewelled entrances are lain;
Forgotten springs may summer now reclaim
And visions of the autumn yet remain,
Behold the night hath passed away in flame!

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Reflected splendour on the sea below
Hath blazoned through the waves a royal way—
A path of glory such as angels know,
That leads the wondering soul to kneel and pray.
Stray threads of sun are shining in the glade,
Where dews of morning sparkle in the shade
The pearly webs an alien beauty gain;
High in the maple, down the leafy lane,
A robin's song with neither words nor name
Falls in a cadence like a silver rain,
Behold the night hath passed away in flame!

L'Envoi

"Let there be light!" the angels now ordain,
For links of morning, distant seas enchain,
Into the waiting heart new courage came,
And from the deep there rose a siren strain—
Behold the night hath passed away in flame!

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Illustrations

FROM DRAWINGS BY DALTON STEVENS

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"PARDON ME, BUT CAN YOU TELL ME WHOSE PICTURES THESE ARE?" *Frontispiece*

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The White Shield

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The White Shield

PEOPLE said that Joe Hayward's pictures "lacked something." Even the critics, who know everything, were at a loss to find where the deficiency might be. Hayward, himself, worked hard studying the masters, patiently correcting faults in colour and perspective, and succeeding after a fashion. But he felt that art, in its highest and best sense, was utterly beyond him; there was a haunting elusive something which was continually beyond his reach.

Occasionally, when he sold a picture, he would give "a time" to a dozen artist chums from studios near by, as they did, whenever fortune favoured them; after this he would pain again, on and on, with a really tremendous perseverance.

At length, he obtained permission to make an exhibition of his work in a single room at the Art Gallery. The pictures were only ten in number, and some of them

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were small, but they represented a year's hard work. When he superintended the hanging, on Saturday morning, he was more nearly happy than he had ever been in his life. The placard on the door, "The Hayward Exhibition will open Monday," filled him with pleasure. It was not a conceited feeling of importance, but rather a happy consciousness that he had done his best.

At last he was suited with the arrangement. The men went out with the ladder and wire, and he stood in the centre of the room, contemplating the result. The landscape in the corner might be a little out of drawing, he thought, but the general public would not notice that. And the woman in white, beside it, which he had christened *Purity* certainly showed to good advantage. He remembered very well the day he had put the finishing touches upon it after the night of revelry in which he had helped Jennings and a dozen other ellows from neighbouring studios to celebrate the sale of Jennings' *Study of a Head*, and how he had thought, at the time, that he, who spent such nights, had no business to paint a figure like this of *Purity*.

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As he turned to leave the room, he saw a grey gowned young woman, who evidently did not know that the pictures were not as yet upon public view. She passed him as she came in, with a rustle of silken skirts and a cooling odour of violets. Seeing the key of the room in his hand, she turned to him and said: "Pardon me, but can you tell me whose pictures these are?"

"These are Hayward's," he replied.

"Hayward," she repeated after him, as if the name were wholly new to her.

"Hayward is a young artist and of purely local reputation," he explained. "This is his first public exhibition."

She surveyed the collection without any very strong show of pleasure, until he remarked, "You don't seem to think much of his beginning."

She was prompt in her answer: "No, I do not, they seem to lack something."

He sighed inwardly. That old, old, "something." Hayward's pictures all lacked "something" as everybody said of them; but what that something was, his intimates, his fellow artists, were not the kind to know.

"What is it, do you think?" he asked.

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"I don't know," she replied slowly. "If one knew the man, one might be able to tell."

For the first time she looked him full in the face. He saw nothing but her eyes, clear and honest, reading him through and through.

"Yes," he answered, "if you knew the man, I think you could tell."

"I 'm not at all sure," she laughed, "It 's only a fancy of mine."

Drawing a watch from her belt, she looked surprised and turned away. He listened until the silken rustle had completely ceased. Then he, too, went out and on the stair he found a fine handkerchief edged with lace, delicately scented with violet, and minutely marked in the corner: "Constance Grey."

On Sunday night, the studio building where Hayward and others painted glowed with light. The morrow's opening of "The Hayward Exhibition" was being celebrated with "a time" at the expense of the artist. Glasses clinked, and the air was heavy with smoke, two women from a vaudeville theatre, near by made merry upon an impromptu stage.

Everybody seemed to be happy except

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Hayward. The owner of the handkerchief was in his mind. He felt that those eyes of her's grey, deep, and tender, though they were, might blaze with anger at a scene like this. The handkerchief had no place in such an atmosphere. He went over to his book case, and put it between the leaves of his Tennyson, smiling as he caught the words on the opposite page:

"A man had given all other bliss
And all his worldly worth for this,
To waste his whole heart in one kiss
Upon her perfect lips."

Her handkerchief would feel more at home there, he thought, though as he closed the book, he could not help wondering what she would say if she looked into the room.

A quick eye had followed his movement, and soon afterward its owner, Jennings, took occasion to examine the volume. He waved the handkerchief aloft triumphantly. "Heigho, fellows! Hayward 's got a new mark for his clothes! Look here —'Constance Grey'!" Hayward was shaken with mingled shame and anger that he could not explain, even to himself.

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The words and tone with which he commanded his friend to put the little thing back where he had found it were as hot as they were foolish. For a moment the two men faced each other; then Jennings apologised, and afterward Hayward murmured a sort of apology also. In sparkling champagne they drank to good fellowship again. But the incident was not without a certain subtle effect upon the celebration, and at one o'clock Hayward sat alone with his face buried in his hands, a dainty handkerchief spread out before him, and beside it was the rapidly sketched outline of a face which he had just completed.

He knew now why the action of Jennings had made him so furious. The shaft of light from a woman's eyes, which once strikes deep into the soul of every man, had at last come home to him.

The "opening" was auspicious. Wealth and art alike were well represented. One of his most important pictures was marked "sold" before the evening was over, and everybody congratulated the artist upon his good fortune. In praise of his art, however, very little was said that did not somehow carry in it, perhaps silently, the old drawback—the implication that some-

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thing was lacking; still exultation ran rife in his veins. There were throngs of beautiful women there and he was the centre of it all.

Toward the end of the evening, a lady who had once sat for a portrait came up to him. She was one of a little group who came in late after a theatre party, but she approached with the air of an old friend.

"Mr. Hayward," she said, "I want you to know my niece."

He followed her into the next room where a young lady sat upon a divan. Her grey eyes were lifted to his face, and then suddenly lowered in confusion.

"Mr. Hayward," she said, "I am so ashamed!" And when he tried to reassure her, she answered: "Let 's not talk about it—it 's too humiliating!"

So they spoke of other things. He learned that she had come from a distant city to visit relatives, and the aunt invited him to call upon them. Friday afternoon came at last, when Miss Grey and her aunt were at home. Other Fridays followed, and other days which served as well as Fridays. It was seldom that the girl looked him in the face; but when she did so, he felt himself confessed before her—a

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man with no right to touch even the hem of her garment, yet honouring her with every fibre of his being.

They were much together and Constance took a frank enjoyment in his friendship. He made every effort to please her, and one day they went into the country.

Constance was almost childishly happy, but the seeming perfection of her happiness distressed him when he learned that in a very few days she was to sail for Europe, pass the summer and autumn in travel, and spend the winter in Paris.

At length they sat down under a gnarled oak tree and watched the light upon the river and in the sky. After an embarrassing silence Hayward spoke:

"I think you know the man now,—will you tell me what you think of his pictures?"

She hesitated. "I do not know the man well enough to say, but I will give you my art creed, and let you judge for yourself. I believe that a man's art is neither more nor less than the expression of himself, and that, in order to obtain an exalted expression, his first business is with himself. Wrong living blunts, and eventually destroys, the fundamental sense of right

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and wrong without which a noble art is impossible. When a man's art is true, it is because he himself is true. The true artist must be a man first, and an artist afterward."

Hayward took her admonition with the meekness becoming his position as her worshipper. The conversation ended with his declaration that he would not paint again until he had something in himself which was worthy of being put into his picture.

"You 'll help me, won't you?" he asked.

Her eyes filled. "Indeed I will, if I only can."

He went home with love's fever in his veins. She had promised to help him, and surely there was only one way. He wrote her an ardent note, and an hour later his messenger brought her reply.

"Believe me, I never dreamed of this, and you know what my answer must be; but I do not need to tell you that whatever sincere and honest friendship can offer is already yours.

"With deep regret, I am as ever,

"CONSTANCE GREY."

The grim humour of the thing stunned

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him momentarily and he laughed harshly. Then he flung himself down in a passion of grief. In the morning he took pen and paper again, after a night of sleepless distress.

"You cannot mean what you say. That white womanly soul of yours must wake to love me some day. You have stood between me and the depths, and there has been no shame in the life that I offer you, since you came into it.

"Oh, you perfect thing, you perfect thing, you don't know what you are to me! Constance, let me come!"

The answer was promptly forthcoming:

"I cannot promise what you ask, but you may come and see me if you wish."

Pale with expectancy, Hayward was only the ghost of himself when the servant admitted him. He had waited but a moment when Constance entered the room wearing the gown in which he had first seen her. He rose to meet her, but she came and sat down by his side.

"Listen," she said, "and I will tell you how I feel. I am twenty-five and I have never 'cared.' I do not believe that I

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ever shall care, for the love that we read of is almost incomprehensible to me. You cannot marry such a woman."

His answer was fervent, his words crowded one upon another in a vehement flood, and his voice was low and hoarse with pent-up emotion, as he implored her to believe in him, trust him, and be his wife,—kneeling at her feet and kissing her hands in abject humility.

It was very hard for her to say what she must, but with an effort she rose and drew away from him.

"I must be true to myself and to you," she said, "and I can say nothing but the old bitter No."

White and wretched, he went away, leaving her white and wretched behind him.

For days and weeks thereafter, Hayward painted busily. Jennings went to see him one afternoon.

"Look here, old fellow," he said, "what 's the matter? I know I was ungentlemanly about the handkerchief, but that 's no reason why you should cut us all this way. Can't you forget about it?"

"Why, Jennings, old boy, I have n't cut anybody."

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"No, but you 've tired of us, and you can't hide it. Come down the river with us to-night. The fellows have got a yacht, and we 'll have supper on board with plenty of champagne. Won't you come?"

Hayward was seriously tempted. He knew what "the time" would mean—the ecstasy of it and the dull penalties which would follow. But that day by the river came into his memory: a sweet sunlit face, and a woman's voice saying to him: "When a man's art is true, it is because he himself is true."

"Jennings," he said, "do I look like a man who would make good company at a champagne supper? You know what 's the matter with me. Why don't you just sensibly drop me?"

Jennings begged, and mocked, and bullied, all in a good-natured way, but his friend was firm. When he went out, Hayward locked the studio door and drew his half finished picture from behind a screen.

"She was right," he said to himself.

Constance sailed. He dreamed of his picture as being hung in the Salon, and of her seeing it there. By and by it was finished, but the artist's strength was gone,

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and his physician ordered him away from his work.

When he returned, restored to health, the picture was placed on exhibition. Crowds thronged the gallery, columns and pages were written in its praise, and astonishing prices were offered for it, but the picture was not for sale. It, too, crossed the water, and the dream which had comforted him for many months at last came true.

When Constance looked upon Hayward's painting, her heart leaped as if it would leave her breast. White, radiant, and glorified, it was she herself who stood in the centre of the canvas. That self-reliant, fearless pose seemed to radiate infinite calm. Behind her raged the powers of darkness, utterly helpless to pass the line on which she stood. Her face seemed to illumine the shadows around her; her figure was instinct with grace and strength. Below the picture was the name: *The White Shield.*

The beauty of the conception dawned upon her slowly. Pale and trembling, she stood there, forgetful of the place, and the throng around her. At length she knew what she meant to him; that his art at

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last rang true because he had loved her enough to be a man for her sake.

She dared not linger before it then, but she came again when the place was empty, and stood before her lover's work, like one in a dream. The fiends in the shadow showed her the might of the temptations he had fought down. She gazed at her own glorified face until her eyes filled with tears. With a great throb which was almost pain, Constance woke to the knowledge that she loved him, even as he loved her—well enough to stand between him and danger till she herself should fall.

The old grey guard, passing through the room, saw her upturned face in that moment of exaltation. It was the same that he saw in the picture above, and he quietly went away to wait until Constance came out, her face flushed and her eyes shining like stars, before he locked the door.

That night the cable trembled with a message to America. It reached Hayward the next morning as he sat reading the daily paper. The envelope fluttered unheeding to the floor, and his face grew tender then radiant as he read the few words which told him that his picture had rewarded his love.

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"Wait," he said to the messenger boy. Hurriedly he wrote the answer: "Sailing next steamer"—then, utterly oblivious of the additional expense, he added another word, which must have been very expressive, for Constance turned crimson when it reached her—perhaps because the discerning genius who copies cablegrams in typewriting had put the last word in capitals, thinking that the message came from a Mr. Darling.

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An International Affair

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An International Affair

THE Committee of Literary Extension was holding its first meeting. Five girls sat around a glowing gas log and nibbled daintily at some chocolates which had been sent to the hostess.

"Come, Margaret, you 're the chairman of this committee; please tell us what it is all for," suggested Grace Hayes.

"Well, girls, I hardly know how to begin. Most of us in travelling have seen those little huts along the railroad with a little bit of cultivated ground around each one. They are the very embodiment of desolation. I have seen whole families come out to stare at the train as it whirled by, and I have often wondered what place there could be for such people in this beautiful, happy world—why I should have my books and friends and the thousand other things that have been given to me, while other people, and worst of all, other women, have to live lives like that.

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"There are boys upon farms, in reform schools, and in little towns who scarcely ever see even a newspaper, and who do not know what a magazine is.

"It is to reach this class of people that this work has been undertaken, and for this purpose our committee has been appointed. Fifteen or twenty magazines and illustrated papers come to us every month—even to the few who are here to-day: perhaps some of you see even more than this. After we have read them, we might send them to these people instead of burning them, and who can tell how many starving minds we may make better, and happier, in this simple way, and with very little effort on our part?"

"Can they read?" It was Grace, an always practical individual, who spoke.

"If they can't, they can learn," responded Miss Stone. "It will be an incentive to their best efforts in every way."

Katherine Bryant leaned forward, her face flushed, and her eyes shining. "Girls," she said, "it 's perfectly beautiful. We 'll send all of our own magazines and illustrated papers, all we can collect from other sources, and we 'll raise money to

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buy new ones. I don't know of any other way in which we can do so much good."

Plan after plan was suggested, and at last it was decided that the committee should write to a society in Boston which did similar work, and ask for the names and addresses of twenty-five persons who were in need of reading matter. These could be removed from the lists of the Boston society, as the Committee on Literary Extension of the Detroit Young Woman's Club would attend to their needs in future.

In due time the list arrived, with a few particulars opposite each name. The committee was again called together, and the chairman gave each girl five names.

"Katherine dear," she said, "there are some more names in the little note-book that is upstairs in my desk. They are all boys who have left the reform school. A friend of mine, who is one of the directors, gave them to me, and there are only four or five. Would you mind taking those in addition to your own?"

"Not at all," and Katherine ran up to Margaret's desk.

"Wonder where she keeps her note-book! Oh, here it is, and here is the list."

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She copied busily. "One, two, three, four; that 's all. No, here 's another on the next page," and at the end of her slip she wrote: "Robert Ross, Athol, Spink Co., South Dakota." The work was taken up in earnest and many magazines were collected within the next few days. A strict account was kept of everything sent out, and occasionally the girls met to compare notes.

Margaret came home one day and found Mrs. Boyce waiting for her. "My dear," said the lady, "I 've lost an address that troubles me, and I think it may have been on the card that I gave you the other day."

"I 'll see," replied Margaret, "I copied them all that very afternoon." She took her note-book out of her chatelaine bag and handed it to Mrs. Boyce. "Which one is it?"

The elder lady laughed in a relieved way. "This last one," she answered. "Robert Ross. He 's my favourite nephew, off on a shooting trip, and he wants me to write to him. He 'd never forgive me, if I did n't. Just give me a card, and I will try not to be so careless again."

Meanwhile Katherine was absorbed in addressing magazines with great vigour.

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She had found a pile of back numbers in the attic and was trying to divide them properly. The household journals went to a woman in Kansas, fifty miles from a city, others she mailed to a boy of sixteen who was on a farm in Minnesota, and a copy of a popular magazine was addressed to Mr. Robert Ross. At the top of each one she had written, "From Miss Katherine Bryant, Jefferson Ave., Detroit."

A short time afterward, she received a pathetic letter from the woman to whom she had sent the household magazines. "I married for love," she wrote, "and have never been sorry, but I miss many of the things to which I was accustomed in my eastern home. A magazine is an unusual thing upon a Kansas farm, and with all my heart I thank you for the great pleasure you have given a lonely woman."

Mindful of the fact that one of the objects of the committee was to get into correspondence with its beneficiaries, Katherine sat down to write an encouraging note to her and also to others, but before she had finished the postman brought another letter.

It had been mailed in South Dakota. The paper was the white ruled variety, to

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be found in country stores, but the penmanship was clear and business-like.

"My dear Miss Bryant," the letter began, "I am sure I don't know what good angel possessed you to send me a copy of my favourite magazine, but I am none the less grateful and only too happy to acknowledge it. I am hurt, but the doctor thinks not seriously, and that I shall be all right in a few weeks. The magazine which you so kindly sent has given me the first pleasant day I have had for some time.

"I should be most happy to receive a letter from you, but of course that is too much for a stranger to ask, even though he be ill and alone.

"Sincerely and gratefully yours,
"Robert Ross."

Katherine knit her pretty brows, and read it over again. "It 's no queerer than the one I got from the Kansas woman," she decided. "At any rate, they both seem glad to get them and they shall have some more."

She wrote very kindly to Robert Ross, inquiring into the particulars of his injury, and whether or not he lived on a farm. She said he was very fortunate, if he did

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indeed live in the country, because so many people were pining away and dying in the great cities. The magazine she had sent was one of her own favourites also, and she would send the next number as soon as it came out. In the meantime, she hoped the package of papers she was sending in the same mail would prove acceptable.

Out on the porch of the Athol House, Mr. Ross sat in the sun and reviled creation in general. It was a palatial hotel—for that region—but he seemed unmindful of his advantages.

"Oh, confound it," he groaned, "why could n't I have shot some other idiot instead of myself? I ought not to be trusted with a gun! Right in the height of the prairie chicken season too, and those other fellows, three of them, off bagging every bit of the game! I hope they won't forget to come back this way, and take me home with them! Emperor, old fellow, it 's hard luck. Is n't it?"

The Irish setter, who had been addressed, came and put his cold nose into Mr. Ross's hand. The well-bred dog had refused to desert his wounded master, even for the charms of prairie chickens, and touched by his dumb devotion Ross permitted him to

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stay. Long conversations were held every day, and Emperor told Ross as plainly as a dog could, that if it had n't been for that dreadful flesh wound they would be having a fine time in the fields, capturing more game than any other dog and man in the party.

When the landlord returned from the post-office he brought a letter which Emperor carried in triumph to his master. Ross read it in surprise. Who Miss Bryant might be, he did not know, but she wrote a pleasant letter, and it was certainly kind of her to notice him.

He decided that the letter he wrote in acknowledgment of the magazine must have been extremely well done. He thought of the unknown fair one for some time, and then concluded to write again. He was non-committal about himself, fearing to spoil any delusion she might have been labouring under when she sent the magazine.

When Katherine received the second letter, she felt several pricks of conscience. It was n't a nice thing she was doing, and she knew it. But a person should n't let squeamishness interfere with philanthropic work, so she answered promptly.

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She drew him into a discussion of an article on "The Desirability of Annexing Canada to the United States," and he criticised it harshly. He forgot to tell her that he was a Canadian by birth and a loyal subject of the King. His point of view was naturally distorted, and she replied with some spirit, dealing very patiently, however, with the frail arguments which he had submitted.

Katherine thought the discussion was a good thing. Anything that would make him think was an unmixed blessing. She fairly glowed as she thought of the mental stimulus she might give to this poor Dakota farmer, who had been hurt in some mysterious way, and her letters grew longer even as they increased in frequency, for Mr. Ross wrote very promptly indeed. She could well understand that, when a cripple had so little to occupy his time in that far away wilderness.

Ross was highly amused. He admired Miss Bryant's letters and wished he might see Miss Bryant herself. A bright idea (as he thought) occurred to him—why not?

With very red cheeks, Miss Katherine read the latest news from Spink County.

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Her own beautiful Irish setter put his head into her lap, and begged to be petted.

"Go away, Rex, I want to think. The wretch! To ask for my photograph! He evidently does n't know his place! I 'll teach him where it is and then take the name of the impertinent creature off my list!"

She sat down to compose a letter which should make Mr. Robert Ross, alias wretch, squirm in agony. Rex was persistent and put his paw up to shake hands. Katherine turned and looked at him.

"You 're a dreadfully nice doggie, but I wish you 'd go away and not bother me."

Then an idea came to her which startled her at first, but grew more attractive as she became better acquainted with it. She bent down and whispered to Rex, and he wagged his tail as if he fully understood.

"Yes, Rex, it 's got to be done. I 'm sorry to sacrifice any of your beauty, but you 've got to get your mistress out of a scrape. Come on!" And the willing Rex was escorted into the back yard.

Sooner than he expected, Mr. Ross found a letter at his plate when he limped in to the customary breakfast of black coffee and fried eggs. On this occasion,

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he omitted the eggs and hastily swallowed the coffee, for the envelope was addressed in familiar style.

It was a very pleasant letter. The writer seemed to meet his advances in a proper spirit, but there was no photograph. "I don't give my pictures to young men, nor old ones either, but I enclose a lock of hair which I have cut off on purpose for you, and I hope you will be pleased with it."

He looked at the enclosure again and again. It was a single silky curl, of a beautiful reddish gold, tied daintily with blue ribbon. He certainly was pleased with it, as she had hoped. "Hair like this and violet eyes," soliloquised Ross. "I must write again without delay." So when the landlord went to the post-office he mailed another letter to Miss Bryant. The first page consisted wholly of raptures.

He began to think that Athol was not so dull a place as he had at first imagined. Those fellows off in the fields shooting prairie chickens were not having any better time than he and Emperor in this thriving town. It was true that Emperor slept most of the time, but magazines, and papers, and letters not only made the

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time less tedious, but there seemed to be opening up a vista of romance which made the tramping in the stubbly fields look very much less attractive.

While he thought of it, he would read Miss Bryant's letter again. He took it out of the envelope, and the curl fell unnoticed to the floor of what the landlord was pleased to term "the front stoop." Emperor walked over, and seemed interested. His master did not notice him, being absorbed in the letter; at last the dog sniffed uneasily, and then growled, so Ross looked up and was surprised to find him pawing something vigorously. Still Ross did not see what the dog had. "What 's the matter with you, old fellow?" Emperor growled again, and bit fiercely at the curl. Its owner rescued it at once, but the dog would not be appeased. He made such a fuss that his master put the letter away. Then Emperor made another attack on the curl, and Ross took it away from him again and examined it closely. A queer look came into his face and a queerer note into his voice. "Emperor, come here. Keep still."

The long golden fringe that made Emperor's tail the thing of beauty that it was,

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was drawn up on his knee and the curl was laid beside it. There was no doubt at all. It matched exactly. Ross leaned back in his chair with a low whistle. "Well—by—Jove! I wonder if she 'll tell me when she writes," he said to himself. With a despairing grin, he remembered his raptures on the subject and decided that Miss Bryant would be very certain to tell him where that "sweet curl" came from!

When the missive from Spink County reached Detroit, Miss Katherine Bryant was a very happy girl. As a rule, it takes very little to make girls happy. For the first time in her life, she longed for a confidant, and unlike most girls, she had none. She took Rex for a long walk and told him all about it. The poor dismantled tail wagged in ecstasy, but his mistress was not sure that he understood the joke in its entirety.

At last she would have her revenge and she took keen delight in answering that letter. "I quite agree with you concerning the beauty of the hair," she wrote. "It came from my beautiful Irish setter, and I am very glad you are pleased with it, though to tell the truth, I should think you utterly heartless if you were not."

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Ross sent an elaborate apology for his impertinence, and confessed that he admired her all the more for outwitting him. Inwardly, he wished that Emperor had made his discovery before he had mailed that idiotic letter. His manliness, however, appealed to Katherine and she did not take his name off the list.

In the meantime, the three other men returned to their wounded comrade. They had been very successful and were profuse in their expressions of regret. Ross said nothing of his unknown friend. He felt that it would not be fair to her, and anyhow, when a girl has sent you dog-hair, and you have raved over it, it is n't best to tell of it. He was sure that all the circumstances were in favour of his keeping still about it.

The ugly wound had quite healed when the four men started East together. At St. Paul they separated, Ross and Emperor taking the night train for Detroit and the promised visit to Mrs. Boyce.

She was delighted to see her nephew, and Emperor soon found his way into her good graces. His master took him out for a stroll the same day he arrived, the dog having been long confined in a box-car,

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and the released captive found his excursion especially refreshing. At a corner, however, he met another Irish setter, also out for a stroll, and the two speedily entered into a violent discussion.

A snarling, rolling, mahogany-coloured ball rolled toward Ross, and a young lady followed, crying at the top of her voice, "Rex! Rex! Come here."

The owner of Emperor rushed into the disturbance with his cane, and succeeded in resolving the ball into its component parts.

Rex, panting and injured, was restored to his agitated mistress, while Emperor chafed at his master's restraining hand.

Apologies were profuse on both sides. "I 'm stronger than you," Ross said, "and if you can hold your dog until I get mine out of sight, we shall have no more trouble."

Miss Bryant scolded Rex until his head and tail drooped with shame, and relentlessly kept him at heel all the way home.

At her own gate, she met Margaret Stone, to whom she told the story of her adventure with the handsome stranger, and the other dog, who "looked so much

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like Rex that his own mother could not have told them apart!"

Margaret's errand was a brief one. Mrs. Boyce was coming over to the Stone mansion with her nephew and she wanted Katherine to come to dinner and stay all night. So Katherine put on her prettiest gown and went over, little thinking what fate had in store for her.

She instantly recognised in Ross the man she had met a few hours before under very different circumstances. He was too much of a gentleman to allude to the occurrence, but she flushed uncomfortably.

Both girls found him an exceedingly pleasant fellow. Katherine had recovered from her embarrassment, and was laughing happily, when Mrs. Boyce began to speak of the Committee on Literary Extension and the good work the girls were doing.

"Do you know, Bob," she went on, "that I nearly lost your address in that way? I gave it to Margaret with the names of some boys from the Reform School. It 's a blessed wonder you did n't get magazines and tracts!"

If Robert had been an angel he would not have looked at Katherine, but being merely human he did. Miss Bryant rose

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in a dignified manner. "Margaret," she said unsteadily, "I must go home."

"Why, Katherine, you were going to stay all night!"

"My—head—aches," she answered.

"Bob," commanded Mrs. Boyce, "you must take Katherine home."

"It 's not at all necessary," pleaded Katherine piteously.

"But I insist," repeated Mrs. Boyce with the utmost good will.

Mr. Ross rose. "If Miss Bryant will permit me, I shall be only too glad to accompany her home," he said courteously.

There was nothing to do but submit with the best grace she could assume. Once out of doors, she was the first to break the silence:

"I 'm afraid to be out alone—in the city."

"Yes," replied her escort cheerily, "it 's a pity you did n't bring your dog!" He could have bitten his tongue out for making such an unlucky speech, but to his surprise Katherine broke down and sobbed hysterically.

Mr. Ross took both her hands in his own. "You are tired and nervous, Miss

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Bryant, and I beg you to think no more about what has happened. You have no idea how much good you did me out in that miserable little place, and I shall be only too glad to be your friend, if you will let me."

Katherine wiped her eyes: "If you can be my friend, I ought to be very willing to be yours," and just outside of her door Canada and the United States clasped hands in a solemn treaty of peace.

Safely in her own room, the mistress of Rex sat down before the mirror and studied her face attentively. "Katherine Bryant," she said to herself, "you are an idiot! Not foolish, nor silly, nor half witted, nor anything like that—just a plain idiot! He has graduated from the University with high honours, and you, with your miserable little boarding-school education, have instructed him on many subjects. I am thoroughly ashamed of you."

When she finally slept, her dreams were a medley of handsome strangers, mixed with dogs, and reddish-yellow curls tied up with blue ribbons.

Leaning up against the corner lamp-post, Mr. Robert Ross indulged in a spasm of

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irreverent mirth, but with a great effort he preserved a calm exterior when he again entered the drawing-room of his hostess.

On their way home Mrs. Boyce said: "Bob, why don't you go into business with your uncle and become a good American citizen? We'd love to have you with us, and there is surely a good opening here."

"I 'll think about it," he answered, and he did, with the usual result, for it is proverbial that he who hesitates is lost.

Mr. Boyce was quite willing to shift a part of his responsibility to the broad shoulders of his nephew, and an agreement was easily reached. Emperor was quartered in the back yard, where he fretted for a few days and then wreaked his vengeance on sundry grocery boys and milkmen.

When his master went out, the dog usually went along except when Miss Bryant and Rex were to be favoured with a call. If the two dogs met, the customary disturbance ensued. Rex included Ross in his hatred of Emperor, and Emperor was equally hostile toward Miss Bryant.

"Rex," said Katherine, one day, "you are a very nice doggie, but I won't have

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you treat Mr. Ross with such disrespect. The other night, when we were going out, you had no business to growl when he buttoned my gloves, nor to sniff in that disgusted way at the roses he brought. If you ever do that again, I shall let the dog-catcher take you to the pound!"

The imaginary spectacle of Rex en route to the pound nearly unnerved Katherine, but she felt that she must be severe. Ross punished Emperor with a chain, or with confinement in the back yard, which the dog hated, but where it was necessary to keep him a part of the time, and for a while all went well.

But Ross went away one evening without explaining matters to the sensitive being in the back yard.

Emperor knew well enough where he had gone—knew he was visiting that disagreeable girl who owned that other Irish setter—a very impertinent dog whose manners were so bad that he was a disgrace to the whole setter tribe!

He sulked over his wrongs for an hour or so, and then crawled out through a friendly hole in the fence which he had for some time past been spending his hours of imprisonment in making.

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The dining-room of the house on the avenue was lighted by a single gas jet, and the shades were lowered. Miss Bryant and the chafing dish together had evolved a rarebit which made the inner man glow with pleasure.

"Do you remember that awful quarrel we had about annexing Canada to the United States?" asked Robert.

Katherine remembered distinctly.

He went over to her side of the table. "What do you think about it now?"

It was a very ordinary question, but Miss Bryant turned scarlet.

"I—I don't know," she faltered.

He put his arm around her. "I give in," he said; "annexation is the most desirable thing in the world—when shall it take place?"

Katherine raised her head timidly. "Say it, sweetheart," he whispered tenderly.

It happened at this moment that Emperor arrived in search of his master. Rex was sitting on the front steps and declined to take in his card. Then the shrieking, howling barking ball rolled into the vestibule, and Ross made a dash for the door. With considerable effort he got Rex into the back yard, and locked Emperor into

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the vestibule. Then he went back to Katherine.

He tried to speak lightly, but his voice trembled with earnestness: "Dearest, this entire affair has been coloured, and suggested by, and mixed up with dogs. I think now there will be an interval of peace for at least ten minutes, and I am asking you to marry me."

Rex raised his voice in awful protest, and Emperor replied angrily to the challenge, as he raged back and forth in the vestibule, but Robert heard Katherine's tremulous "Yes" with a throb of joy which even the consciousness of warring elements outside could not lessen. The little figure against his breast shook with something very like a giggle, and Katherine's eyes shining with merriment met his with the question: "What on earth shall we do with the dogs?"

Robert laughed and drew her closer: "It 's strictly international, is n't it? Canada and the United States quarrel——"

"And Ireland arbitrates!" said Katherine.

Three months later, in the drawing-room on Jefferson Avenue, to the accompaniment of flowers, lights, and soft music,

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"Do you remember that awful quarrel we had about annexing Canada to the United States?" asked Robert.

From the Drawing by Dalton Stevens.

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the treaty was declared permanent. There was a tiny dark coloured footprint on the end of Katherine's train, which no one appeared to notice, and a white silk handkerchief carefully arranged hid from public view a slightly larger spot on the shining linen of the bridegroom, where Emperor had registered his enthusiastic approval of his master's apparel.

But the rest of the committee, in pale green gowns, were bridesmaids, while Emperor and Rex, resplendent in new collars, and having temporarily adjusted their difference as long as they were under guard, had seats of honour among the guests.

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A Child of Silence

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A Child of Silence

AT the end of the street stood the little white house which Jack Ward was pleased to call his own. Five years he had lived there, he and Dorothy. How happy they had been! But things seemed to have gone wrong some way, since—since the baby died in the spring. A sob came into Jack's throat, for the little face had haunted him all day.

Never a sound had the baby lips uttered, and the loudest noises had not disturbed his rest. It had seemed almost too much to bear, but they had loved him more, if that were possible, because he was not as other children were. Jack had never been reconciled but Dorothy found a world of consolation in the closing paragraph of a magazine article on the subject:

"And yet we cannot believe these Children of Silence to be unhappy. Mrs. Browning says that 'closed eyes see more

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truly than ever open do,' and may there not be another world of music for those to whom our own is soundless? In a certain sense they are utterly beyond the pain that life always brings, for never can they hear the cruel words beside which physical hurts sink into utter insignificance. So pity them not, but believe that He knoweth best, and that what seems wrong and bitter is often His truest kindness to His children."

Dorothy read it over and over until she knew it by heart. There was a certain comfort in the thought that he need not suffer—that he need never find what a world of bitterness lies in that one little word—life. And when the hard day came she tried to be thankful, for she knew that he was safer still—tried to see the kindness that had taken him back into the Unknown Silence of which he was the Child.

Jack went up the steps this mild winter evening, whistling softly to himself, and opened the door with his latch-key.

"Where are you, girlie?"

"Up stairs, dear. I 'll be down in a minute," and even as she spoke Dorothy came into the room.

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In spite of her black gown and the hollows under her eyes, she was a pretty woman. She knew it, and Jack did too. That is he had known, but he had forgotten.

"Here 's the evening paper." He tossed it into her lap as she sat down by the window.

"Thank you." She wondered vaguely why Jack did not kiss her as he used to, and then dismissed the thought. She was growing accustomed to that sort of thing.

"How nice of you to come by the early train! I did n't expect you until later."

"There was n't much going on in town, so I left the office early. Any mail? No? Guess I 'll take Jip out for a stroll." The fox-terrier at his feet wagged his tail approvingly. "Want to go, Jip?"

Jip answered decidedly in the affirmative.

"All right, come on," and Dorothy watched the two go down the street with an undefined feeling of pain.

She lit the prettily shaded lamp and tried to read the paper, but the political news, elopements, murders, and suicides lacked interest. She wondered what had come between her and Jack. Something had, there was no question about that;

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but—well, it would come straight sometime. Perhaps she was morbid and unjust. She could n't ask him what was the matter without making him angry and she had tried so hard to make him happy.

Jip announced his arrival at the front door with a series of sharp barks and an unmistakable scratch. She opened it as Jack sauntered slowly up the walk and passed her with the remark:

"Dinner ready? I 'm as hungry as a bear."

Into the cozy dining-room they went, Jip first, then Jack, then Dorothy. The daintily served meal satisfied the inner man, and he did not notice that she ate but little. She honestly tried to be entertaining, and thought she succeeded fairly well. After dinner he retired into the depths of the evening paper, and Dorothy stitched away at her embroidery.

Suddenly Jack looked at his watch. "Well, it 's half past seven, and I 've got to go over to Mrs. Brown's and practise a duet with her for to-morrow."

Dorothy trembled, but only said: "Oh, yes, the duet. What is it this time?"

"'Calvary,' I guess, that seems to take the multitude better than anything we

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sing. No, Jip, not this time. Good-bye, I won't be gone long."

The door slammed, and Dorothy was alone. She put away her embroidery and walked the floor restlessly. Mrs. Brown was a pretty widow, always well dressed, and she sang divinely. Dorothy could not sing a note though she played fairly well, and Jack got into a habit of taking Mrs. Brown new music and going over to sing it with her. An obliging neighbour had called that afternoon and remarked maliciously that Mr. Ward and Mrs. Brown seemed to be very good friends. Dorothy smiled with white lips, and tried to say pleasantly, "Yes, Mrs. Brown is very charming, don't you think so? I am sure that if I were a man I should fall in love with her."

The neighbour rose to go and by way of a parting shot replied: "That seems to be Mr. Ward's idea. Lovely day, is n't it? Come over when you can."

Dorothy was too stunned to reply. She thought seriously of telling Jack, but wisely decided not to. These suburban towns were always gossipy. Jack would think she did not trust him. And now he was at Mrs. Brown's again!

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The pain was almost blinding. She went to the window and looked out. The rising moon shone fitfully upon the white signs of sorrow in the little churchyard far to the left.

She threw a shawl over her head and went out. In feverish haste she walked over to the little "God's Acre" where the Child of Silence was buried.

She found the spot and sat down. A thought of Mrs. Browning's ran through her mind:

"Thank God, bless God, all ye who suffer not
More grief than ye can weep for——"

Then someway the tears came, a blessed rush of relief.

"Oh, baby dear," she sobbed, pressing her lips to the cold turf above him, "I wish I were down there beside you, as still and as dreamless as you. You don't know what it means—you never would have known. I 'd rather be a stone than a woman with a heart. Do you think that if I could buy death I would n't take it and come down there beside you? It hurt me to lose you, but it was n't the worst. You

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would have loved me. Oh, my Child of Silence! Come back, come back!"

How long she stayed there she never knew, but the heart pain grew easier after a while. She pressed her lips to the turf again. "Good night, baby dear, good night. I 'll come again. You have n't lost your mother even if she has lost you!"

Fred Bennett passed by the unfrequented spot, returning from an errand to that part of town, and he heard the last words. He drew back into the shadow. The slight black figure appeared on the sidewalk a few feet ahead of him and puzzled him not a little. He followed cautiously and finally decided to overtake her. As she heard his step behind her she looked around timidly.

"Mrs. Ward!"

His tone betrayed surprise, and he saw that her eyes were wet and her white, drawn face was tearstained. She shuddered. A new trouble faced her. How long had he been following her?

He saw her distress and told his lie bravely. "I just came around the corner here."

Her relieved look was worth the sacrifice of his conscientious scruples, he said to himself afterward.

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"I may walk home with you, may I not?"

"Certainly."

She took his offered arm and tried to chat pleasantly with her old friend. Soon they reached the gate. She dropped his arm and said good night unsteadily. Bennett could bear it no longer and he took both of her hands in his own.

"Mrs. Ward, you are in trouble. Tell me, perhaps I can help you." She was silent. "Dorothy, you will let me call you so, will you not? You know how much I cared for you in a boy's impulsive fashion, in the old days when we were at school; you know that I am your friend now—as true a friend as a man can be to a woman. Tell me, Dorothy, and let me help you."

There was a rustle of silk on the pavement and her caller of the afternoon swept by without speaking. Already Dorothy knew the story which would be put in circulation on the morrow. Bennett's clasp tightened on her cold fingers. "Tell me, Dorothy, and let me help you!" he said again.

The impulse to tell him grew stronger, and she controlled it with difficulty. "It

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is nothing, Mr. Bennett, I—I have a headache."

"I see, and you came out for a breath of fresh air. Pardon me. I am sure you will be better in the morning. These cool nights are so bracing. Good night, and God bless you—Dorothy."

Meanwhile Bennett was on his way to Mrs. Brown's cottage. His mind was made up, and he would speak to Jack. He had heard a great deal of idle gossip, and it would probably cost him Jack's friendship, but he would at least have the satisfaction of knowing that he had tried to do something for Dorothy. He rang the bell and Mrs. Brown herself answered it.

"Good evening, Mrs. Brown. No, thank you, I won't come in. Just ask Jack if I may see him a minute on a matter of business."

Ward, hearing his friend's voice, was already at the door.

"I 'll be with you in a minute, Fred," he said. "Good night, Mrs. Brown; I am sure we shall get on famously with the duet." And the two men went slowly down the street.

They walked on in silence until Jack said: "Well, Bennett, what is it? You

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don't call a fellow out like this unless it is something serious."

"It is serious, Jack; it's Dor—it's Mrs. Ward."

"Dorothy? I confess I am as much in the dark as ever."

"It 's this way, Jack, she is in trouble."

Ward was silent.

"Jack, you know I 'm a friend of yours; I have been ever since I 've known you. If you don't take what I am going to say as I mean, you are not the man I think you are."

"Go on, Fred, I understand you. I was only thinking."

"Perhaps you don't know it, but the town is agog with what it is pleased to term your infatuation for Mrs. Brown." Jack smothered a profane exclamation, and Bennett continued. "Dorothy is eating her heart out over the baby. She was in the cemetery to-night sobbing over his grave and talking to him like a mad woman. I came up the back street, and after a little I overtook her and walked home with her. That 's how I happen to know. And don't think for a moment that she has n't heard the gossip. She has, only she is too proud to speak of it. And

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Jack, old man, I don't believe you 've neglected her intentionally, but begin again and show her how much you care for her. Good night."

Bennett left him abruptly, for the old love for Dorothy was strong to-night; not the fitful flaming passion of boyhood, but the deeper, tenderer love of his whole life.

Jack was strangely affected. Dear little Dorothy! He had neglected her. "I don't deserve her," he said to himself, "but I will."

He passed a florist's shop, and a tender thought struck him. He would buy Dorothy some roses. He went in and ordered a box of American Beauties. A stiff silk rustled beside him and he lifted his hat courteously.

"Going home, Mr. Ward? It 's early, is n't it? "But," with scarcely perceptible emphasis, "it 's—none—too soon!" Then as her eager eye caught a glimpse of the roses, "Ah, but you men are sly! For Mrs. Brown?"

Jack took his package and responded icily, "No, for Mrs. Ward!" "Cat!" he muttered under his breath as he went out. And that little word in the mouth of a man means a great deal.

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He entered the house, and was not surprised to find that Dorothy had retired. She never waited for him now. He took the roses from the box and went upstairs.

"Hello, Dorothy," as the pale face rose from the pillow in surprise. "I 've brought you some 'roses!" Dorothy actually blushed. Jack had n't brought her a rose for three years; not since the day the baby was born. He put them in water and came and sat down beside her.

"Dear little girl, your head aches, does n't it?" He drew her up beside him and put his cool fingers on the throbbing temples. Her heart beat wildly and happy tears filled her eyes as Jack bent down and kissed her tenderly. "My sweetheart! I 'm so sorry for the pain."

It was the old lover-like tone and Dorothy looked up.

"Jack," she said, "you do love me, don't you?"

His arms tightened about her. "My darling, I love you better than anything in the world. You are the dearest little woman I ever saw. It is n't much of a heart, dear, but you 've got it all. Crying? Why, what is it, sweetheart?"

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"The baby," she answered brokenly, and his eyes overflowed too.

"Dorothy, dearest, you know that was best. He was n't like—" Jack could n't say the hard words, but Dorothy understood and drew his face down to hers again.

Then she closed her eyes, and Jack held her until she slept. The dawn found his arms around her again, and when the early church bells awoke her from a happy dream she found the reality sweet and beautiful, and the heartache a thing of the past.

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The Dweller in Bohemia

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The Dweller in Bohemia

THE single lamp in "the den" shone in a distant corner with a subdued rosy glow; but there was no need of light other than that which came from the pine knots blazing in the generous fireplace.

On the rug, crouched before the cheerful flame, was a woman, with her elbow on her knee and her chin in the palm of her hand.

There were puzzled little lines in her forehead, and the corners of her mouth drooped a little. Miss Archer was tired, and the firelight, ever kind to those who least need its grace, softened her face into that of a wistful child.

A tap at the door intruded itself into her reverie. "Come," she called. There was a brief silence, then an apologetic masculine cough.

Helen turned suddenly. "Oh, it 's you," she cried. "I thought it was the janitor!"

"Sorry you 're disappointed," returned

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Hilliard jovially. "Sit down on the rug again, please,—you 've no idea how comfortable you looked,—and I 'll join you presently." He was drawing numerous small parcels from the capacious pockets of his coat and placing them upon a convenient chair.

"If one might enquire—" began Helen.

"Certainly, ma'am. There 's oysters and crackers and parsley and roquefort, and a few other things I thought we might need. I know you 've got curry-powder and celery-salt, and if her gracious ladyship will give me a pitcher, I 'll go on a still hunt for cream."

"You 've come to supper, then, I take it," said Helen.

"Yes 'm. Once in a while, in a newspaper office, some fellow is allowed a few minutes off the paper. Don't know why, I 'm sure, but it has now happened to me. I naturally thought of you, and the chafing dish, and the curried oysters you have been known to cook, and——"

Helen laughed merrily. "Your heart 's in the old place, is n't it—at the end of your esophagus?"

"That 's what it is. My heart moves up into my throat at the mere sight of you."

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The colour flamed into her cheeks. "Now will you be good?" he continued enquiringly. "Kindly procure for me that pitcher I spoke of."

He whistled happily as he clattered down the uncarpeted stairs, and Helen smiled to herself. "Bohemia has its consolations as well as its trials," she thought. "This would be impossible anywhere else."

After the last scrap of the feast had been finished and the dishes cleared away, Frank glanced at his watch. "I have just an hour and a half," he said, "and I have a great deal to say in it." He placed her in an easy chair before the fire and settled himself on a cushion at her feet, where he could look up into her face.

"'The time has come, the walrus said, to talk of many things,'" quoted Helen lightly.

"Don't be flippant, please."

"Very well, then," she replied, readily adjusting herself to his mood, "what 's the trouble?"

"You know," he said in a different tone, "the same old one. Have you nothing to say to me, Helen?"

Her face hardened, ever so slightly, but he saw it and it pained him. "There 's no use going over it again," she returned, "but

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if you insist, I will make my position clear once for all."

"Go on," he answered grimly.

"I 'm not a child any longer," Helen began, "I 'm a woman, and I want to make the most of my life—to develop every nerve and faculty to its highest and best use. I have no illusions but I have my ideals, and I want to keep them. I want to write—you never can understand how much I want to do it—and I have had a tiny bit of success already. I want to work out my own problems and live my own life, and you want me to marry you and help you live yours. It 's no use, Frank," she ended, not unkindly, "I can't do it."

"See here, my little comrade," he returned, "you must think I 'm a selfish beast. I 'm not asking you to give up your work nor your highest and best development. Is n't there room in your life for love and work too?"

"Love and I parted company long ago," she answered.

"Don't you ever feel the need of it?"

She threw up her head proudly. "No, my work is all-sufficient. There is no joy like creation, no intoxication like success."

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"But if you should fail?"

"I shall not fail," she replied confidently. "When you dedicate your whole life to a thing, you simply must have it. The only reason for a failure is that the desire to succeed is not strong enough. I ask no favours—nothing but a fair field. I 'm willing to work, and work hard for everything I get, as long as I have the health and courage to work at all."

He looked at her a long time before he spoke again. The firelight lingered upon the soft curves of her throat with a caressing tenderness. Her eyes, deep, dark, and splendid, were shining with unwonted resolution, and her mouth, though set in determined lines, had a womanly sweetness of its own. Around her face, like a halo, gleamed the burnished glory of her hair.

For three long years he had loved her. Helen, with her eyes on things higher than love and happiness, had persistently eluded his wooing. His earnest devotion touched her not a little, but she felt her instinctive sympathy for him to be womanish weakness.

"This is final?" he asked, rising and standing before her.

She rose also. "Yes, please believe me

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—it *must* be final; there is no other way. I don't want lovers—I want friends."

"You want me, then, to change my love to friendship?"

"Yes."

"Never to tell you again that I love you?"

"No, never again."

"Very well, we are to be comrades, then?"

She gave him her hand. "Yes, working as best we may, each with the understanding and approval of the other; comrades in Bohemia."

Some trick of her voice, some movement of her hand—those trifles so potent with a man in love—beat down his contending reason. With a catch in his breath, he crushed her roughly to him, kissed her passionately on the mouth, then suddenly released her.

"Women like you don't know what you do," he said harshly. "You hold a man captive with your charm, become so vitally necessary to him that you are nothing less than life, enmesh, ensnare him at every opportunity, then offer him the cold comfort of your friendship!"

He was silent for a breathless instant;

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then in some measure, his self-control came back. "Pardon me," he said gently, bending over her hand. "I have startled you. It shall not occur again. Good night and good luck—my comrade in Bohemia!"

Helen stood where he had left her until the street door closed and the echo of his footsteps died away. The fire was a smouldering heap of ashes, and the room seemed deathly still. Her cheeks were hot as with a fever, and she trembled like one afraid. It was the first time he had crossed the conventional boundary, and he had said it would be the last, but Love's steel had struck flame from the flint of her maiden soul.

"I wish," she said to herself as she put the room in order, "that I lived on some planet where life was n't quite so serious."

For his part he was pacing moodily down the street, with his hands in his pockets. Several times he swallowed a persistent lump in his throat. He could understand Helen's ambition, and her revolt against the conventions, but he could not understand her point of view. Even now, he would not admit that she was wholly lost to him. What she had said

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came back to him with convincing force: "When you dedicate your whole life to a thing, you simply must have it."

"We 'll see," he said to himself grimly, "just how true her theory is."

Months passed, and Helen worked hard. She was busy as many trusting souls have been before with "The Great American Novel." She was putting into it all of her brief experience and all of her untried philosophy of life. She was writing of suffering she had never felt, and of love she could not understand.

She saw Frank now and then, at studio teas and semi-Bohemian gatherings, at which the newspaper men were always a welcome feature. There was no trace of the lover in his manner, and she began to doubt his sincerity, as is the way with women.

"So this is Bohemia?" he asked one evening when they met in a studio in the same building as Helen's den.

"Yes,—why not?"

"I was thinking it must be a pretty poor place if this is a fair sample of the inhabitants," he returned easily.

She flushed angrily. "I do not see why you should think so. Here are authors,

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"So this is Bohemia?" he asked one evening when they met in a studio in the same building as Helen's den.

From the Drawing by Dalton Stevens.

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musicians, poets, painters and playwrights —could one be in better company?"

He paid no attention to her ironical question. "Yes," he continued, "I see the authors. One is a woman—pardon me, a female—who has written a vulgar novel, and gained a little sensational notoriety. The other is a man who paid a fifth-rate publishing house a goodly sum to issue what he calls 'a romance.' The musicians are composers of 'coon songs' even though the African Renaissance has long since waned, and members of theatrical orchestras. The poets have their verses printed in periodicals which 'do not pay for poetry.' The only playwright present has written a vaudeville sketch—and I don't see the painters. Are they painting billboards?"

"Perhaps," said Helen, with exquisite iciness, "since you find us all so far beneath your level, you will have the goodness to withdraw. Your superiority may make us uncomfortable."

Half in amusement, and half in surprise, he left her in a manner which was meant to be coldly formal, and succeeded in being ridiculous.

After a while, Helen went home, dis-

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satisfied with herself, and for the first time dissatisfied with the Bohemia over the threshold of which she had stepped. Always honest, she could not but admit the truth of his criticism. Yet she was wont to judge people by their aspirations rather than by their achievements. "We are all workers," she said to herself, as she brushed her hair. "Every one of those people is aspiring to what is best and highest in art. What if they have failed? Not fame, nor money, but art for art's dear sake. I am proud to be one of them."

In the course of a few weeks the novel was finished, and she subjected it to careful, painstaking revision. She studied each chapter singly, to see if it could not be improved, even in the smallest detail. When the last revision had been made, with infinite patience, she was satisfied. She wanted Frank to read it, but was too proud to make the first overtures towards reconciliation.

The first three publishers returned the manuscript with discouraging promptness. Rejected short stories and verse began to accumulate on her desk. Sunday newspaper specials came home with "return"

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written in blue pencil across the neatly typed page. Courteous refusal blanks came in almost every mail, and still Helen did not utterly despair. She had put into her work all that was best of her life and strength, and it was inconceivable that she should fail.

Two more publishing houses returned her novel without comment, and with a sort of blind faith, she sent it out again. This time, too, it came back, but with a kindly comment by the reader. "You cannot write until you have lived," was his concluding sentence. Helen sat stiff and still with the letter crumpled in her cold fingers.

Slowly the bitter truth forced itself upon her consciousness. "I have failed," she said aloud, "I have failed—failed—failed." A dry tearless sob almost choked her, and with sudden passionate hatred of herself and her work, she threw her manuscript into the fire. The flames seized it hungrily. Then, someway, the tears came—a blessed rush of relief.

Hilliard found her there when he came at dusk, with a bunch of roses by way of a peace offering. The crumpled letter on the floor and the shrivelled leaves of

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burned paper in the fireplace afforded him all the explanation he needed. He sat down on the couch beside her and took her trembling hands in his.

The coolness of his touch roused her, and she sighed, burying her tear-stained face in the roses. "I have failed," she said miserably, "I have failed."

He listened without comment to the pitiful little story of hard work and bitter disappointments. "I 've given up everything for my art," she said, with a little quiver of the lips, "why should n't I succeed in it?"

The temptation to take her in his arms temporarily unmanned him. He left her abruptly and stood upon the hearth rug.

"You are trying to force the issue," he said quietly. "You ar'n't content to be a happy, normal woman, and let art take care of itself. You should touch life at first hand, and you are not living. You are simply associating with a lot of hysterical failures who call themselves 'Bohemians.' Art, if it is art, will develop in whatever circumstances it is placed. Why should n't you just be happy and let the work take care of itself? Write the little things that come to you from day to day,

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and if a great utterance is reserved for you, you cannot but speak it, when the time comes for it to be given to the world."

Helen stared at him for a moment, and then the inner tension snapped. "You are right," she said, sadly, instinctively drawing toward him. "I am forcing the issue."

They stood looking into each other's eyes. Helen saw the strong, self-reliant man who seemed to have fully learned the finest art of all—that of life. She felt that it might be possible to love him, if she could bring herself to yield the dazzling vista of her career. All unknowingly, he had been the dearest thing in the world to her for some little time. Bohemia's glittering gold suddenly became tinsel. There came a great longing to "touch life at first hand."

He saw only the woman he loved, grieved, pained, and troubled; tortured by aspirations she could not as yet attain, and stung by a self-knowledge that came too late. A softer glow came into Helen's face and the lover's blind instinct impelled him toward her with all his soul in his eyes.

"Sweetheart," he said huskily.

Helen stopped him. "No," she said

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humbly, "I must say it all myself. You are right, and I am wrong. I must live before I am a woman and I must be a woman before I can be an artist. I have cared for you for a long time, but I have been continually fighting against it—I see it all now. I will be content to be a happy woman and let the work take care of itself. Faulty, erring and selfish, I see myself, now, but will you take me just as I am?"

The last smouldering spark of fire had died out and left the room in darkness. Helen's face showing whitely in the shadow was half pleading, and wholly sweet.

Speechless with happiness, he could not move. A thousand things struggled for utterance, but the words would not come. She waited a moment, and then spoke again.

"Have I not humbled myself enough? Is there anything more I can say? I should not blame you if you went away, I know I deserve it all." The old tide of longing surged into the man's pulses again, and broke the spell which lay upon him. With a little cry, he caught her in his arms. She gave her lips to his in that kiss of full surrender which a woman gives but once in her life, then, swinging on silent hinges, the doors of her Bohemia closed forever.

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A Minor Chord

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A Minor Chord

ONE afternoon before Christmas, a man with bowed head and aimless step walked the crowded streets of a city. The air was clear and cold, the blue sky was dazzlingly beautiful, the sun shone brightly upon his way, yet in his face was unspeakable pain.

His thoughts were with the baby daughter whom he had seen lowered into the snow, only a few hours before. He saw it all,—the folds of the pretty gown, the pink rose in the tiny hands, and the happy smile which the Angel of the Shadow had been powerless to take away.

"You will forget," a friend had said to him.

"Forget," he said to himself again and again. "You can't forget your heart," he had answered, "and mine is out there under the snow."

Through force of habit, he turned down the street on which stood the great church

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where he played the organ on Sundays and festival days. He hesitated a moment before the massive doorway, then felt in his pocket for the key, unlocked the door and went in. The sun shone through the stained glass windows and filled the old church with glory, but his troubled eyes saw not. He sat down before the instrument he loved so well and touched the keys with trembling fingers. At once, the music came, and to the great heart of the organ which swelled with pity and tenderness, he told his story. Wild and stormy with resentment at first, anger, love, passion, and pain blended together in the outburst which shook the very walls of the church.

"God gives us hearts—and breaks them," he thought and his face grew white with bitterness.

Beside himself with passion, he played on, and on, till the sun sank behind the trees and the afternoon shaded into twilight.

As the shadows filled the church, he accidentally struck a minor chord, plaintive, sweet, almost sad.

He stopped. With that sound a flood of memories came over him—an autumn day in the woods, the trees dropping leaves

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of crimson and gold, the river flowing at his feet, with the purple asters and golden-rod on its banks, and beside him the fair sweet girl who had made his life a happy one;—and insensibly he drifted into the melody, dreaming, on the saddest day of his life, of the day which had been his happiest.

He remembered the look in her eyes when he had first kissed her. Beautiful eyes they were, brown, soft, and tender, with that inward radiance which comes to a woman only when she looks into the face of the man she loves.

"I will go to her," he whispered, "but not yet, not yet!" And still he played on in that vein of sadness, the sweet influence stealing into his heart till the pain was hushed in peace. Conscious only of a strange sense of uplifting, the music grew stronger as the thought of the future was before him. He was young, talented, he had a wife to live for, and a child—no, not a child—and the tears stole over his cheeks as he again touched the minor chord.

The crescendo came again. The child was safe in the white arms of the snow, and she was hidden away from the sorrows of the earth in the only place where we are ever safe from these—in its heart.

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The moon had risen over the hill-tops, and the church was as light as if touched on every side with silver. The organ sounded a strain of exultation in which the minor chord was in some way mingled with the theme. He could face the world now. Any one can die but it takes a hero to live. Something he had read came back to him: "Once to every human being, God gives suffering—the anguish that cuts, burns and stings. The terrible 'one day' always comes and after it our hearts are sometimes cruel and selfish—or sometimes tender as He wishes them to be."

And the strong soul rose above its bitterness, for his "one day" was over, and it could never come again. His strength asserted itself anew as he came down from the organ loft and went toward the door. A little bundle in one of the pews attracted his attention, and he stooped to see what it was. A pale, pinched baby face looked up at him wonderingly, the golden hair shining with celestial glory in the moonlight. The hair, the eyes, the position of the head were much like those of the child he had lost.

Back came the rush of infinite pain—he was not so strong as he had thought—but

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only for an instant. Hark! was it an echo or his own soul playing upon his quivering heartstrings the minor chord? Again the new strength reasserted itself and into his consciousness rose the higher duty to the living over the love and faith for the lost.

"Was it you played the music?" said the sweet child voice. "I heard it and I comed in!"

"Dear," he said, "where is your home? Are you all alone?"

"Home," she said wonderingly. "Home?"

Without another word, he took the child in his arms and hurried out of the doorway. Along the brilliantly lighted avenue he hastened, till he reached the little cottage in a side street. It was dark within except for the fitful glancings of the moonlight, and he deposited his burden in a big arm-chair while he went in search of his wife.

"Sweetheart," he called, "where are you?"

The sweet face came into the shadow before him, and she laid her hand upon his arm without speaking. He led her to the little waif saying simply: "I have brought you a Christmas gift, dear."

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She put out her empty arms and gathered the desolate baby to her breast. The eternal instinct of motherhood swelled up again and for a moment, in the touch of the soft flesh against her own, the tiny grave in the snow seemed only a dream.

"Theodora—Gift of God," he said reverently. Then as the clouds parted, and the moonlight filled every nook and corner of the little room: "Dearest, we cannot forget, but we can be brave, and our Gift of God, shall keep us; shall it be so?"

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The Madonna of the Tambourine

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The Madonna of the Tambourine

WITH a discordant rumble of drums, and the metallic clang of a dozen tambourines, the Salvation Army procession passed down the street. When the leader paused at a busy corner and began to sing, a little knot of people quickly gathered to listen. Some quavering uncertain voices joined in the hymn as the audience increased, then mindful of his opportunity, a tall young man in red and blue uniform began an impassioned exhortation.

George Arnold and his friend Clayton lingered with half humorous tolerance upon the outskirts of the crowd. They were about to turn away when Arnold spoke in a low tone:

"Look at that girl over there."

The sudden flare of the torch-light revealed the only face in the group which could have attracted Arnold's attention. It was that of a girl but little past twenty, who stood by the leader holding a tambour-

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ine. She was not beautiful in the accepted sense of the word, but her eyes were deep and lustrous, her mouth sensitive and womanly, and the ugly bonnet could not wholly conceal a wealth of raven hair. Her skin had a delicate pearly clearness, and upon her face was a look of exaltation and purity as though she stood on some distant elevation, far above the pain and tumult of the world.

After a little, the Salvationists made ready to depart, and Arnold and Clayton turned away.

"I suppose," said Clayton, speaking tentatively, and gazing at the girl, "that we have no right to criticise any belief which puts a look like that upon a woman's face."

"We have no right to say a word," returned Arnold, "until we have the grace to do some of the things which they do."

Clayton soon forgot, but the glorified, childish face haunted Arnold. In the hope of seeing her again, he frequented the curbstones where the meetings were held. Often, he wondered at the holy peace in the eyes of so young a woman. He had seen the same expression before, but the face it illumined had always been battle-scarred and weary.

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"She has n't suffered yet," he said grimly, "and that is the thing that tells."

Months passed and summer shaded imperceptibly into autumn. Then, with little sharp flurries of cold, winter took its place. Arnold was hard at work in that merciless slavery which is found only at the newspaper desk.

"You 're just a cog in the machine," he said to Clayton one day. "Some day the thing goes wrong, and they find out it 's your particular cog, and they get a new one. That 's all there is to it."

Clayton laughed at his friend's cynicism, as he could well afford to do, for he had just been called to a distant city to fill an important position upon the staff of a larger and more influential journal.

For some time, Arnold's particular cog did yeoman service. He ground out more "copy" than any man on the staff. He had the keenest nose for news—the most delicate way of handling a good story.

Sometimes as he wrote at his desk, the face of the young Salvationist intruded itself between him and his work. He smiled at his foolish fancy, but dramatic incidents began to take shape about the image of that girl. He planned "The

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Great American Novel"—there is no newspaper man who could not write it, if he only had the time—and she was to be the central figure.

All the possibilities of womanhood lay in that sweet Madonna-like face. Thinking along the lines of art the new century seemed to have laid down, he struck the key-note of his theme—the development of the individual. His Madonna might suffer or not, but she must grow into her highest and best. He turned the story over in his mind, studying it from every standpoint. It was not yet ready for paper and pen.

A year went by, and various kinds of trouble came to Arnold. Something eventually became wrong with the newspaper machine, for he worked only by fits and starts, and at last he was asked for his resignation. His face was white and determined when he handed it in, but he felt that he was facing failure.

He had a little money laid by for an emergency; at all events, it was enough to supply his wants until he could write his book. He went at it feverishly, but the work soon began to drag. The far-off, elusive phantom of his ideal mocked at

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him behind its expression. Then he went more slowly still, and, by almost imperceptible degrees, he went steadily down the pitiful ladder which leads from bad to worse. Ambition faded, hope died, and at last he found himself on a level with humanity at its worst—an outcast of the slums. Strong drink had done its work.

He never knew how he happened to lose the remnant of his self-respect and get into a quarrel with a man distinctly his inferior, nor how he managed to slip on the icy sidewalk and fall heavily against the curbstone. Merciful unconsciousness blinded him for a time, and when he came to his senses he was in a tiny room, scantily furnished, but exquisitely neat and clean. He was staring at the unfamiliar surroundings when a soft foot-fall sounded beside the bed. He looked up—to meet the clear eyes of the Madonna.

He was about to speak, but she stopped him by a gesture. "Hush," she said, in a voice of mellow sweetness which soothed him inexpressibly, "you must not talk now."

The touch of her cool fingers on his throbbing temples seemed to ease the pain. He was quite willing to obey her

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and keep quiet. It was not until the day following that he knew how badly he had been hurt, and that it would be at least two months before he could walk again. "Compound fracture," the doctor said, and Arnold shuddered, for he had heard of such things before.

As the days went by, the gentle ministry of the Madonna did not for a moment fail. "I say," he said huskily, one morning, "what makes you so good to me?"

The high color mounted to her temples. "I want you to get well, that 's all."

She had a library card and brought books which he suggested. Her room was near his and often in the night when he was restless with pain, she came in silently, and, holding his hot hand in her cool fingers, read until he went to sleep. He remembered her afterwards as she sat in the lamplight, her hair falling around her shoulders and over the loose black gown which she wore about the house.

Her voice soothed and charmed him. It was full of lights and, little caressing notes and a haunting sweetness which, someway, he could not forget. There had been but one woman in his life, and he knew there would be no other.

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The broken bones knit slowly, but the doctor was encouraging, and he tried hard to be patient. He was ashamed to give way to petulance in the presence of this gentle, sweet-voiced woman, whose name he knew, but whom he preferred to call "Madonna."

"It means 'my lady,'" he said to her one day, "and that is what you are to me."

Through the whole of one painful night she read to him from Mrs. Browning, only resting at short intervals when from very weariness he fell into a short and troubled slumber.

Her education had been sadly neglected, he discovered, but her eager facile mind was quick to comprehend. She had too, that inner sense of beauty which makes all art its own.

Her voice suited itself to the exquisite melody of the words as she read "A Denial." When it was finished she sat quite still, with a dreamy, far-away look in her eyes.

"Of what are you thinking, Madonna?" he asked tenderly.

"Of this—of what it must be for a man and woman who love each other to go away like this—because it is n't right for

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them to be together—never to see each other again." Then she read once more those four lines which have in them all the strength of loving and all the pain of parting.

"So farewell, thou whom I have met too late
To let thee come so near;
Be happy while men call thee great
And one beloved woman feels thee dear—"

Something tightened around his heart and he took her cold fingers into his own. "There 's nothing in all the world that hurts like that, Madonna. God keep you from knowing about it, little girl."

An older woman would have taken warning from his words, but she did not. The caressing way in which he said "little girl" filled her soul with strange joy. She had a childish, unquestioning faith in him. Some day when he was better—but further than this her maiden thought refused to go. She simply waited, as a queen might wait for her coronation day.

He was planning to repay her kindness if it were in any way possible. He knew she would not take money from him, but there were other ways. Flowers—for he

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knew she loved them—the books that she liked best, and perhaps something for the unfortunates to whom she gave herself so unreservedly.

The winter was over, and April, warm with May's promise, came in through the open window. Even the sullen roar of the city streets could not drown the cheering song of two or three stray birds.

The week before Easter she brought home a tall slender lily in a pot, with a single bud showing at the top of the green shaft. "They told me it would blossom for Easter," she said happily, but she did not tell him she had saved her carfare for days in order to buy it for him.

He was able to sit up now, but she would not let him go until it was quite safe for him to walk. She seemed to cling, hungrily, to her last days with him. "After Easter," she said bravely, "I won't keep you."

He was watching the lily with impatience almost equal to her own, and tiny lines of white appeared on the green sheath. One day, it seemed as if it would blossom too soon, and again, they feared that it would be after Easter when the perfect flower opened.

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"It had to climb up through a pretty dark place to find the light, did n't it, Madonna?" he asked. "I suppose that 's the way people do, and God knows I 've had my share of the dark."

Her eyes filled with tender pity and he went on. "You know, Madonna, there 's a pretty theory to the effect that you must suffer before you amount to anything. A man can't write nor paint, and a woman can't sing nor play before a cruel hurt. I don't mean the kind that makes a few tears and is followed by forgetfulness—It 's the kind that goes right down where you live and cuts and stings and burns. You never think of it without a shudder, even when the place heals up, if it ever does. If it 's lost friendship, you never have such a friend again—if it 's a lost love, you never can care again. Suffering would make a saint of you, but I don't want you hurt like that—dear little girl."

He spoke no more, but the questioning maiden eyes sought his. It was the day before Easter, and on the day following it he was to leave her.

For almost two months, she had been unfailingly kind to him; reading to him night and day, caring for him as though

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he were a child, and soothing him with her unspoken sympathy. Memory brought it all to him with peculiar distinctness, and a new impulse came to him—an impulse to lay bare his heart before the deep peaceful eyes of this child.

"Dear little Madonna of the Tambourine," he began, "there 's a lot of things I want to tell you before we say good-bye.

"I saw your sweet face at a curbstone meeting once, in the days when I was n't an outcast, and it 's haunted me ever since. I wanted to find the peace which made you so secure and happy—to get at your secret of life. I wanted to be more worthy of—" He stopped and looked at her. Her eyes were shining like stars and with a little catch in his voice, he went on.

"There 's a woman, Madonna, and worthless as I am she loved me, and married me. We were happy for a little while, but I could n't keep away from the cursed drink. That 's what put me into the slums. At last her patience and her love gave out, and she sent me away from her. She told me to come back to her, either with my shield, or on it, and thanks to you, I 'm going back to her to-morrow—with my shield."

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No sound escaped her, but her hand grew cold as ice. Turning, he looked for those starry eyes once more and, in a sudden flash of understanding, he read her secret.

He started to his feet. "Can it be possible that you—that you—I never dreamed—Oh, Madonna! Forgive me—if you can."

There was a long silence, then she said trying to speak steadily, "You are not in the least to blame. I have had no thought of you she could not know."

For a moment they looked into each other's eyes. "I am not worthy of it, Madonna," he said huskily, " I do not deserve the love of any good sweet woman."

"Would—would you go away to-day?" she asked almost in a whisper; then with a brave little smile that went straight to his heart, she added: "It 's better, I think, to be quite alone."

He made his simple preparations, and she helped him as best she could with trembling hands, but it was dark when he was ready to go. Neither could frame the words they were wont to speak at parting, so they stood in silence, hand clasping hand.

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With only pity and understanding in his heart, he wanted to take her into his arms for a moment, but she moved away from him. "No," she said brokenly, "it must be like this. Be what she would have you be—she and I."

She stood as he had left her until the street door closed below. She watched him on the sidewalk, walking with slow uncertain steps, until he was lost in the crowd. Then, stretching out in the dark, her empty hands, she dropped on her knees beside the window. Her shoulders shook with sobs, but there are no tears for such as she. She was far beyond the blessed flow which blinds some eyes to the reality of pain. The inner depths, bare and quivering, are healed by no such balm as this.

She voiced only the simple question which women of all ages have asked in the midst of a cruel hurt—"Why? Dear God, why must it be?"

Some of the last lines of "A Denial" came to her, seemingly in pitiful comment—

"So farewell, thou whom I have met too late
To let thee come so near;
Be counted happy—"

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"If only she can care again," she said to herself, "it will not be so hard for me—if 'one beloved woman feels thee dear!'"

The grey dawn broke at last and found her still upon her knees.

With the brightening east the signs of life began again in the street below. After a little she stood up and looked far across the irregular lines of roofs and chimney tops to the glowing tapestry of the morning spread like a promise in the dull grey of the sky.

"He did n't want me hurt like this," she said aloud. "He told me he did n't want me hurt like this."

The first rays of the sun shot into the little room and rested with loving touch upon her face. The old childish look was gone, but in the eyes of the woman who had wrought and suffered, something of the old peace still lay. She turned back to her bare cheerless room, ready to face the world again, and then a little cry excaped her. White, radiant, glorified, her Easter lily had bloomed.

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A Mistress of Art

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A Mistress of Art

"YOU 're not going out again this evening, are you, George?" Pretty Mrs. Carson seemed on the point of dissolving in tears, but her liege lord buttoned his coat indifferently, and began the usual search for his hat. Having found it, he hesitated for a moment, then came and stood before her. "See here, Kitty," he began, not unkindly; "we might just as well understand this thing first as last. There 's no use in your speaking to me in that tone just because I choose to go out in the evening. When I married you, I did n't expect to be tied to your apron string, and I don't intend to be. I consider myself as free as I was before I was married, and I am perfectly willing to accord the same freedom to you. When you go out, I never ask you where you 've been, nor what time you came home, and I 'd be glad to have you equally considerate of me. Let 's be sensible, Kitty. I hate

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tears and heroics. See?" He stooped to kiss her, and then went off, whistling a jaunty air meant to indicate extreme cheerfulness.

For three evenings of that week Mr. George Carson had sought relaxation and entertainment away from his own fireside. This made the fourth, and the wife of only six months' standing, had a heavy and joyless heart.

Twice before she had spoken of it,—the first time to be answered by a laugh, the second time by very visible irritation, and to-night by the very cool "understanding" chronicled above.

Kitty had made a marriage vow which was not in the ceremony, but which was none the less sincerely meant. "Whatever happens," she said to herself, "I simply will not nag."

She had read the journals for women, written and edited by men, and this seemed to be the corner-stone of every piece of advice; moreover, she believed in pretty gowns, good dinners, and bright conversation with sentiment omitted.

"I can't think what it is," she meditated, during the long cheerless evening. Mr. Carson's appetite had proved beyond question that the dinner was good, and her

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pretty house gown was certainly becoming —and then Kitty broke down and wept, for the gown was a new one and George had not noticed it. On such trifles does the happiness of women depend!

In the journals for women, written and edited by men, great stress was laid on the fact that after a woman was married, she must keep her troubles to herself. She believed this, too, but the next day, her old school friend, Helen Everett, happened in, and she sobbed out her woes in the customary place—on the shoulder of a spinster—forgetting the deterrent effect on the marriage license business.

"My dear," said that wise young person, "men simply will go out nights. I should n't care myself—it leaves a nice long evening to read or study, or embroider, or practice, and if Mr. Helen Everett did n't want to stay with me, I 'd be the last one to hint that I wanted him to."

"You 're a man-hater, Helen," said Mrs. Carson, trying to smile, "but I 'm not. I want George to stay at home a part of the time. Of course I 'm willing for him to go out occasionally, for of all things, I despise a 'sissy-man', but four or five evenings a week—is—too—much!"

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The dainty handkerchief came into use again.

"Philosophy teaches us," said Helen, reminiscently, "that people, especially men, always want what they can't get." Kitty was reminded of the scholarly tone in which Helen had delivered her thesis at commencement. "To quote a contemporary essayist, 'If a mortal knows that his mate cannot get away, he is often severe and unreasonable.' There is also a good old doctrine to the effect that 'like cures like.'"

"Well?" said Kitty, enquiringly.

"I never put my fingers into anybody's matrimonial pie," resumed Helen, "so I 'll let you think out your own schemes to keep the charming Mr. Carson under his own vine and fig tree, but you know I live only three blocks away, and there are no followers in my camp. My brother would take you home, any time you might care to come."

Kitty was silent.

"Think it over, dear," said Helen as she rose to go.

After several minutes of hard thought, Kitty arrived at Helen's meaning. "This evening shall decide it," she said to herself.

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"If he stays at home, I shall think that he cares just a little bit; but if he does n't, I 'll make him care." There was a smouldering fire in Kitty's brown eyes, that might at any time leap into a flame.

The pretty house gown appeared at dinner again, but George, seemingly, took no notice of it. Moreover, immediately after the meal he found his hat, and merely saying: "Bye-bye, Kitty," began the jaunty whistle. She heard it as it grew fainter, and at last, only lost it in the distant sound of a street car.

The emancipated husband had no particular place to go, and his present nocturnal pilgrimage was undertaken purely in the interest of wifely discipline. He dropped into his club, but found it dull; and perhaps the thought of Kitty's sad little face tugged remorsefully at his heart-strings, for he went home early.

The lights were low in the drawing-room, she always left them so for him. "Must have gone to bed about nine," he mused. He went upstairs, expecting to hear her say: "Is that you, dear?" But no sound of any sort greeted him. The house was as silent as a tomb. After a few minutes, it became evident that she was not at home,

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and he sat down with a book to await her arrival.

It seemed strange, someway, without her,—perhaps because her gown hung from the back of a chair. It was a soft pretty thing of pinky-yellow—he mentally decided that must be the colour—trimmed with creamy lace and black velvet ribbon. It was a very pretty gown—a most adorable gown.

It was half-past eleven, when Kitty came home humming the chorus of a popular song. She started in apparent surprise when she saw him. "Oh, it 's you, is it?" she said indifferently.

"Certainly it 's me," he responded irritably. "Whom did you expect to see here?"

Kitty laughed pleasantly, and drew off her gloves. Her tailor-made gown fitted her to perfection, it was his favorite colour, too, and her collar and cuffs were irreproachable.

"Where have you been, Kitty?" he asked in a different tone.

"Oh, just out," she responded with a yawn. "Where have you been?"

"Humph," responded Mr. Carson.

The following evening, she appeared at

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dinner in the same severe gown. She was very pleasant and chatted on topics of current interest quite as if he were a casual acquaintance. She watched him with evident uneasiness afterward, and he was certain that he detected a faint shade of relief on her face when he commenced hunting for his hat.

Before ten he came home, and as he half suspected, Kitty was out. His irritation grew until he was afraid to trust himself to speak, so he pretended to be asleep, when she came home.

The cloud on the matrimonial horizon grew larger. Outwardly Kitty was kind and considerate, and her vigilant care for his comfort was in no way lessened. His things were kept in order and something he particularly liked was always on the table, but the old confidence was gone and in its place was something that he hesitated to analyse.

She went out every night, now. More than once she had left him with a laconic "Bye-bye," and he had spent a miserable evening before an unsympathetic fire. He learned to detest the severely correct gowns that she always wore now.

"I say, Kit," he said as he rose from the

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table, "don't you want to go to the theatre to-night?"

"Can't," she returned shortly, "much obliged for the 'bid' though."

George Carson's hair rose "like quills upon the fretful porcupine." He had a horror of slang from feminine lips, and he had been drawn to Kitty in the first place, because she never used it. "Bid!" Oh, Heavens!

He paid no attention to her cheerful farewell when she left him. He poked the fire morosely, smoked without enjoying it, and at last cast about for something to read. One of the Journals for women, written and edited by men, lay on the table, and he grasped it as the proverbial drowning man is wont to clutch the proverbial straw.

He consulted the pages of the oracle anxiously, and he learned that it was not wise to marry a man who had served a term in the penitentiary, that it was harmless enough for either man or woman to kiss a lady cousin, but that a man cousin must be kept at a fixed and rigid distance—that it was wrong for cousins to marry, and that it was not only immoral, but very dangerous to bleach or dye the hair.

No rule of conduct was specified for the

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man whose wife went out nights, and he wandered aimlessly into the street. The light and cheer of the club house seemed inopportune, like mirth at a funeral, and he retired into a distant corner to think. His intimates hailed him joyously, but were met with marked coldness. One of them, more daring than the rest, laid a sympathetic hand upon his shoulder.

"What 's the matter, old man?"

"Oh, the deuce," growled George, "can't you let a fellow alone?"

He was glad that he got home before Kitty did, for he could pretend to be asleep when she came in. He knew it would be only a pretence, and until midnight he listened for her latch-key in the door. It was long after twelve, when a carriage stopped at the door, and then he heard a manly voice say: "Good night, Mrs. Carson."

"Good night, Johnnie," she returned, and thank you for a pleasant evening."

"Johnnie!" Who in creation was "Johnnie?"

But there was no time to wonder, for Kitty's foot was on the stair, and in a frame of mind not usually favourable to repose, he simulated sleep.

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There was a beautiful bracelet at her plate the following evening.

"Oh, how sweet!" she said, with evident pleasure in her eyes.

"Are n't you going to put it on?" he asked, when she laid it aside.

"Oh, yes," she answered brightly, "only I can't wear it with this gown. Bracelets don't go well with linen cuffs."

She did n't even take it from the table after dinner, as he noted with a pang. Almost immediately she came in with her hat on and stood leisurely drawing on her gloves.

"You 're not going out again to-night, are you Kitty?" he asked.

"See here, George," she returned, "we might just as well understand this thing, first as last. There 's no use in you speaking to me in that tone, just because I choose to go out in the evening. When I married you, I did n't intend to be tied to your apron string—I suppose, I should say, suspender, and I don't intend to be. I consider myself as free as I was before I was married, and I am perfectly willing to accord the same freedom to you. When you go out I never ask you where you have been, or what time you came

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home, and I 'd be glad to have you equally considerate of me. See?"

Without other farewell, she slammed the outer door. He was petrified with astonishment. Were such words ever before addressed by a tyrannical wife to a devoted husband? In the midst of his trouble, the door-bell rang. Friends of his and of Kitty's had come to call.

"Where 's Kit?" asked Mrs. Clay, after they had chatted a moment.

"She 's gone out a minute—yes—no—that is—I don't know," returned George incoherently.

Mr. Clay's ready tact came to the rescue and he picked up a program which lay on the table, half hidden by a magazine.

"Tannhauser," he said cheerfully, "with Gadski as Elizabeth! So you went Tuesday night? We wanted to go, but there were no seats left. How early did you get yours?"

"I—ah—yes—Gadski as Elizabeth—that is—rather early. Yes, she was very fine," said George miserably. The stunning revelation had come to him that on Tuesday night—the evening in which he had heard the carriage and the voices, Kitty had been to the opera with another

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man! And it seemed to fairly paralyse his powers of speech. After a little while the guests politely departed, wondering what in the world was the matter with the Carsons.

"Is he crazy?" asked Mrs. Clay.

"Looks like it," answered her husband concisely.

Carson went up-stairs and searched the closet until he found the pinky-yellow gown with the black velvet bows. He sat down with the pretty fluffy thing in his hands. A delicate odour of violets clung to it—Kitty always had violets around her—and the scent seemed like a haunting memory of a happy past, when he had a wife who wore soft womanly things—who loved to have him kiss her, and never went out nights.

With a sudden rush of tenderness he held the little gown close, but it yielded him no caress in return, and he flung it bitterly aside, feeling as he did so, that he sat among the ashes of a desolate and forsaken home.

He grew white and worn in the days that followed. He knew dimly what a grave might mean, since he felt the hurt of a living loss.

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He wandered through the lonely rooms evening after evening. The sight of her dainty fluffy things made him suffer keenly, and a tiny jewelled slipper he found on the floor almost unmanned him.

He no longer went to the club, but sat at home among Kitty's things while she went out as usual. One evening, after saying "good-bye" she caught her gown on a rocker, and turned back to free herself.

He was sitting before the fire, his elbow resting on his knee, and his chin in the palm of his hand. It was a saddened face that Kitty saw, with all the joy and youth gone out of it. The flickering light made the lines of pain very distinct, and her heart smote her at the realisation of what she had done. Quickly she ran up-stairs and took off her tailor-made costume. When she came down, he was sitting as she had left him, unhearing, unseeing and unheeding.

As she came toward him, he looked up. At the first sight of her in the pinky-yellow gown, he rubbed his eyes as if he had seen wrongly. She came nearer to him, smiling, her hands outstretched, and he sprang to his feet. "Kitty," he

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cried, "are you going to stay at home to-night?"

"To-night, and always, dear, if you want me," she replied.

"Want you—Oh, my little wife!" he said brokenly, and gathered her into his arms.

They had a long talk after that, and Kitty explained that she had been spending her evenings with Helen Everett, who was writing a book, and reading it to her, chapter by chapter as it was finished.

"Who is Johnnie?" demanded George abruptly.

"Helen's brother. He 's only a boy, but he 's a very nice one, and he takes us to all sorts of lovely places."

After a moment she continued wistfully: "Helen 's awfully clever—books, colleges, degrees, and everything."

"And you have only me," said George, laughing, and drawing her closer.

"You 're enough, if I can only keep you," she returned mischievously.

His face grew very grave. "I have been a thoughtless brute, sweetheart. Forgive me," he said kissing her fondly. "And know all men by these presents, I hereby confer upon you the degree of Mistress of Arts."

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A Rosary of Tears

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A Rosary of Tears

THE orchestra had paused, either through simple human pity, or, as seemed more likely, to rest. Even a good orchestra must have time for physical and mental refreshment, and the guests at the St. James would gladly have accorded eternity to this one, had the management been kindly disposed and permitted it.

A faint breath of the tropical night stirred the foliage in the palm-room, where there was light and laughter and the crystalline tinkle of glasses. The predatory lady from Memphis, clad resplendently in white lace, and paste jewels, moved restlessly about the room. Her blue eyes were cat-like in their quick intense scrutiny. They said, at the St. James, that nothing under the roof escaped her knowledge.

Designedly she passed the two who sat at a glass-covered table in a secluded corner, affecting not to notice them. When the

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rustle of her garments and the clatter of her high heels died away, the man spoke.

"She must have spilled the peroxide," he said with a grating laugh. Her hair was indeed more brilliant than usual.

The woman laughed too—a little hysterical laugh which sounded more like a sob. She took her watch from the silver bag that hung at her belt, opened it, and laid it before them.

"An hour more," she answered irrelevantly. "Like Cinderella, I must go at twelve."

"Are you afraid your auto will turn into a pumpkin drawn by white rats and your chauffeur into—let 's see, who was Cinderella's footman?"

She shook her head. "I used to know, but it was long ago when I was a child."

"You 're only a child now," he returned quickly.

"No, I 'm a woman, and I must meet whatever comes to me as a brave woman should." She fixed her clear eyes on his and spoke steadily. "I must n't be a coward, I must n't refuse to do anything just because it is hard. I 've got to be true to my best self, and you 've got to help me."

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The war correspondent's face whitened for an instant, then the colour surged back in waves. "Come out on the balcony," he whispered, "it 's insufferable in here."

She followed him through the French window. Their two chairs were in their own particular corner still, placed as they had been every night for a week. He arranged the rose and green velvet cushion at her back precisely as she liked it, and drew his own chair near hers—just close enough not to touch.

A white-coated waiter whisked out of sight tactfully. He was needed within where the lady from Memphis had cornered a hardware drummer from Pittsburg and was coyly inquiring whether or not champagne was intoxicating.

"A week ago to-night," said the war correspondent abruptly. "I believe now that the world was made in seven days. Mine has been made and shattered into atoms in an equal space of time."

"Don't say that! There 's good in it—there 's got to be good in it somewhere! We 'll have to find it together, past all the pain."

The late moon rose slowly above the grove of palms beyond them; the Southern

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night breathed orange blossoms and roses. A tiny ray of blue light shot from the solitaire on the third finger of her left hand. It was the only ring she wore.

"I can't believe it 's true," he said, somewhat roughly. "If you cared as you say you do, you 'd"—he choked on the word, and stopped abruptly, but his eyes made his meaning clear.

They were unusual eyes—for a man. So she had thought a week ago, when she went down the corridor to her room at midnight, humming gaily to herself a little fragment of a love song. They were big and brown and boyish, with laughter lurking in their depths—they met her own clearly and honestly, always, and in their look there had never been that which makes a woman ashamed. Yes, they were unusual eyes—for a man.

"Honour is an elastic word," she replied. "For most women, it means only one thing. A woman may lie and steal and nag and break up homes, and steam open other people's letters, and betray her friends, and yet, if she is chaste, she is called honourable. I made up my mind early in life, that I'd make my own personal honour include not only that, but the

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things men are judged by, too. If a man broke his solemn pledge, you 'd call him a coward and a cur. So," she concluded with a pitiful pride, "I 'll not break mine."

Her voice was uneven and he felt, rather than saw, the suffering plainly written on her face. "Tell me," he began gently, "of him. What does he look like? What sort of man is he?"

"I came away in such a rush that I forgot his picture, else I 'd show it to you. I would have sent back for it, only I did n't want my people to think I was silly, and besides, there is no need, I could remember how he looked, and every tone of his voice until a week ago to-night."

"Is he tall?" The war correspondent himself was a trifle over six feet.

"No, not very,—only a little taller than I."

"Smooth-shaven?"

"Yes."

"Dark?"

"Very."

"What does he do?"

"Business in a stuffy office, from nine to six. He spends his evenings with me."

"Every evening?"

"Yes, and all day Sunday. There are

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just two things in his life—the office and me."

"Go on," he reminded her, after a pause.

"It 's simple, and, in a way, commonplace. We met, and he cared—terribly—from the first. I did n't, because it was difficult for me to trust any man. I told him so, and he said he 'd make me trust him. He did, but it took him a long time. It 's pathetically easy for a woman to love a man she can trust. And so I wear his ring and have for two years. When I go back, we 're to be married."

"Do you call it honourable to marry one man while you love another?"

"He 's been everything in the world to me," she continued, ignoring the thrust. "I 've never had a doubt nor a difficulty of any kind, since I 've known him, that he has n't helped me through. Every thought that came into my mind, I have felt perfectly free to tell him. We 've never quarrelled. On my side, the feeling has been of long slow growth, but there are no hard words lying between us. It 's all been sweet until now. He 's clean-minded and clean-hearted and true-souled. If he has ever lied to me, I 've never found it out. He has been absolutely and un-

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swervingly loyal in thought, word, and deed, and as for jealousy—why, I don't believe he knows what the word means.

"You know there are two kinds of love. One is an infinite peace that illumines all your life, so surely and so certainly that it 's not to be taken away. It 's like daily bread to you. The other is like wine—swift and terrible and full of fatal fascination. The one has come to me from him—the other from you."

"Honey!" It was the shrill, high, bird-like voice of the lady from Memphis swiftly rounding the corner of the balcony. "Is this your watch? I've found it on the table and I've been looking all over for you!"

"Thank you." Miss Ward took the trinket coldly and never turned her head. The man, having small respect for the lady from Memphis, never rose from his chair.

After a little hesitation she retreated, pausing in the background, among the palms, to shake a warning finger with assumed coquetry.

"Naughty," she shrilled. "You must n't flirt! If you do, I 'll write to your honey and tell him what you are doing. You see

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if I don't. And then he 'll come and catch you at it, and where will you be then?" With a mirthless cackle, she vanished into the palm-room, where there was light and the tinkle of glasses and the bubbling of champagne.

"Half-past eleven," said Miss Ward dully. "Thirty minutes more."

The war correspondent caught his breath as if he had been suddenly hurt. "One little hour," he answered, his voice low and tense with suppressed feeling. "Only one little hour to last us for all eternity, and we 're wasting it like this. I love you, I love you, I love you! I love you with all my heart, with all my soul, with all my strength, and with all my will. I love you so much that heaven would be hell without you, and hell itself would be heaven if you were there. I love you with a love that will not die, when I do. I love you, do you understand? God knows I love you!"

She turned her face towards him thrilled to the depths of her soul. "And I," she breathed, caught in the whirlwind of his emotion, "love you—in just that way!"

His hands closed quickly over hers. "Then," he pleaded, "come. There are

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no barriers between us—they are nothing but cobwebs. Sweep them aside with one stroke of magnificent daring and come. We 'll be married in the morning and sail for New York immediately, then go abroad for a year. Two telegrams will set you free, and explain everything! Come," he whispered, "only come! Youth and love, and the wide world before us! We 'll be together till death divides us! Come —promise me you 'll come!"

In thought she surrendered for an instant, then broke away from him, shuddering. "Don't," she gasped. "Don't make it so hard for me to do what is right. I won't be dishonourable, I won't be disloyal, I won't be untrue. Happiness that comes from wrong doing is always brief, but, oh, dear lad, I love you with a love nobody ever had before, or ever will have again. I 'm not taking anything away from anybody else to give to you, so it is n't dishonourable—it can 't be. Tell me it is n't!" she cried. "Oh, tell me."

"It is n't," he assured her. "You could n't be dishonourable if you tried. You 're the bravest, finest woman I 've ever known."

From within came the notes of a violin

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muted. The piano, mercifully softened, followed the melody with the full rich accompaniment which even miserable playing can never wholly spoil.

"The hours I spent with thee, dear heart,
Are as a string of pearls to me;
I count them o'er, every one apart—
My rosary! My rosary!"

"The pearls mean tears," she whispered brokenly. "Our rosary is made of tears!"

The lady from Memphis clattered past them on the balcony, singing the words apparently to herself, but really with an eye to dramatic—and impertinent—effect.

For a week they had been together, the gayest of the gay crowd. That day all plans had mysteriously fallen through. Miss Ward's chaperon had been called home by a telegram. A letter had caused another unexpected departure, a forgotten engagement loomed up before another, a sick headache laid low a fourth, and only they two were left—the "tattered remnant of the old guard," she laughingly said that morning when they met in the palm-room after breakfast, as usual, to discuss the program of the day.

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"Then," he retorted, "the old guard will make the best of it!"

So they had spent the day together in public places, mindful of the proprieties. A long talk in the afternoon, full of intimate and searching details, had paved the way for the dazzling revelation made by an accidental touching of hands. In an instant, the world was changed.

"Suppose," she said, "that you had been obliged to go away this afternoon, before everything was fully acknowledged between us? Oh, don't you see what we have? We 've got one whole day—a little laughter, and a great deal of love and pain, crystallised by parting and denial, into something sweet to keep in our hearts for always. Nothing can take to-day away from us—it 's ours beyond the reach of estrangement or change. To-night we 'll shut the door upon it and steal away, as from a casket enshrining the dead."

"Not dead," he flashed bitterly, "but buried alive!"

" Oh, memories that bless and burn,
Oh, barren gain and bitter loss,
I kiss each bead and strive at last to learn
To kiss the cross, sweetheart! To kiss
the cross."

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The last echo died away, the violin rattled into its case, the piano was closed. The musicians went home, and there was a general movement toward the doors. A far clock chimed twelve and she rose wearily from her chair. "Good night," she faltered, her hand fluttering toward his; "I cannot say good-bye, but we must never see each other again."

How it happened they never knew, but he took her into his arms, unresisting, and kissed her fully, passionately, upon the lips.

All the joy and pain of the world seemed crowded into the instant they stood there, locked in each other's arms. Then the high, bird-like voice of the lady from Memphis broke on their ears in a grating staccato.

"She was out here, when I saw her last, flirting dreadfully with the war correspondent. I guess she did n't know you were coming on that late train."

Eagerly, happily, the Other Man rushed out on the balcony, crying boyishly, "Mabel! Are you here?"

The words died on his lips. The man who held her in his arms kissed her again, slowly, hungrily; then reluctantly released

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her. She steadied herself against the railing of the balcony. In the moonlight her face was ghastly. The scent of the orange blossoms seemed overpowering her with deadly fragrance.

"Did n't I tell you?" asked the lady from Memphis gleefully. From the open window she was enjoying the situation to the full.

The Other Man was bewildered.

"Mabel," he said enquiringly, "I don't quite understand. Did n't you get my wire?"

The war correspondent stepped forward. He had faced the guns of the enemy before and was not afraid now. A single commanding glance, mingled with scorn, sent the lady from Memphis scurrying back into the palm-room.

"I know who you are," he said to the Other Man, "and I owe you an explanation. I love Miss Ward and I have been trying all day to induce her to break her engagement with you and marry me instead."

The Other Man laughed. He went to the balcony rail, where the girl stood, half fainting, and put his arm around her. "I don't doubt it," he said. "Is n't she

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the finest, sweetest, truest woman the Lord ever made? Any man who does n't love her is a chump. You and I will be good friends—we have a great deal in common."

He offered his hand but the war correspondent bowed and swerved aside. "Good-night," he said thickly. "I have played and lost. I lay down my hand." He went through the window hastily, leaving the two alone.

"Mabel, dear Mabel!" said the Other Man softly. "You 've been through something that is almost too much for you. Sit down and rest—you 're tired!"

The words, calm and tender, brought back to her tortured soul a hint of the old peace. In a pitiless flash of insight she saw before her two women, either of which she might become. One was serene and content, deeply and faithfully loved, sheltered from everything love could shield her from, watched, taken care of in all the countless little ways that mean so much. The other was to know Life to its uttermost, all its rage, jealousy and despair, to be shaken in body and soul by fierce elemental passions, to face eclipsing miseries alone, and drain the cup to the lees. The differ-

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"Good night," he said thickly. "I have played and lost. I lay down my hand."

From the Drawing by Dalton Stevens.

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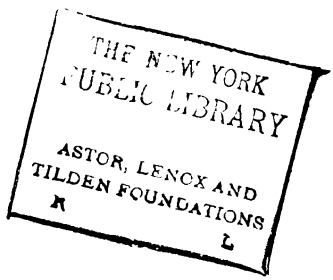

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ence was precisely that between a pleasure craft, anchored in a sunny harbour, and the toiling ship that breasts the tempestuous seas.

She sat down and suffered him to take her hand. He stroked her wrist silently, in the old comforting way he had when she was nervous or tired. His face was troubled—hers was working piteously. The lights had died down in the palm-room and the last of the revellers went away. The house detective paced through the long rooms twice and made a careful survey of the balcony.

"Darling," said the Other Man, "you don't have to tell me anything you don't want to—you know that; but wouldn't it make you feel better? You 've always told me things, and I 'm the best friend you 've got. Surely you 're not afraid now?"

His voice failed at the end, and the girl drew a quick shuddering breath but she did not answer.

"He was kissing you, was n't he?" asked the Other Man, "when I came?"

"Yes," she said dully, "he was kissing me, but it was for good-bye. He told me he loved me, and I had told him I loved

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him. I 've known him only a week. He never so much as touched my hand until to-day, but it was only my own personal honour that kept me from marrying him to-morrow, as he begged me to do. I 've told you the worst now. Believe what you like—do what you will."

The Other Man sighed. His mouth was boyish and for the moment unsteady, but his eyes sought hers as honestly and clearly as the war correspondent's, who had unusual eyes—for a man.

"I think I understand," he said brokenly. "I don 't blame any man for loving you, dear—I 'm prepared for that—and we 've been separated so long, and the moonlight and the palms and the roses and all, and you were used to being loved—I think that 's why. You were lonesome, wer'n't you, sweetheart? Did n't you want me?"

Infinite love and infinite pain surged together in her heart, blending into unspeakable tenderness. "Yes, I wanted you," she whispered—"I always want you. I 'm—I 'm a bit upset just now, but I have n't taken anything away from you to give to anybody else. It 's only an undiscovered country—a big one, that

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he found to-day. I have n't been intentionally dishonourable. I fought but it was no use—he simply swept me off my feet. Forgive me if you can!"

"Hush! There 'll never be any need of that word between you and me. I 've forgiven you long ago, for everything you 've ever done or ever can do. It 's an unlimited fund to draw upon—that and my love. You know," he went on in another tone, "that if it were for your happiness, I could give you up, but I 'm pretty sure it is n't. You 'd never be as happy with anybody you 'd only known a week, as you would with me, because I' ve loved you for years. You have my whole heart, Mabel,—there 's never been another woman with even a hint of a claim. I know all your little moods and tenses and you don't have to explain things to me. I know you can't ride backward and you don't like to walk when you have high-heeled shoes on, and a thousand other things that are infinitely dear just because they are you. I was thinking of them all the way down here, and loving them—every one."

"I don't deserve it," she answered, and then broke into a wild sobbing.

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The Other Man moved his chair closer and drew her head to his shoulder. "There," he said, slipping a handkerchief into the hand that covered her eyes; "cry if you want to. You 're tired—my little girl is tired."

He held her so until the storm had spent itself. He kept his face against her hair, soft and silky, and fragrant with orris—forgetting himself utterly in his loving pity for her. At last she moved away from him. Her tear-stained face in the moonlight, filled him with tenderness so great that his love was pain.

"It 's late," she said, "it must be after one o'clock. I must go up-stairs." She started toward the open window, but still he held her back gently. "Dear," he said softly, "we 've been away from each other four weeks and three days, and I 've come two thousand miles to see you. You have n't kissed me yet. Don't you want to? You don't need to if you 'd rather not, but if you could——"

His voice vibrated with passionate appeal. She lifted her white face to his and kissed him mechanically. "To-morrow," she breathed, "I 'll be more like myself; I 'll try to make up for to-

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night, but if you love me, let me go now!"

He went with her to the elevator, and watched until she was lifted out of his sight, smiling at her until the last—the old loving smile. He went out to the balcony again, and sat down with his arms thrown over the back of the chair that had so recently held her. His brow was wrinkled with deep thought, but his boyish mouth still smiled.

Presently there was a step behind him and he turned—to look into the face of the war correspondent who spoke first.

"I've come back," he said, "to shake hands with you, if you do n't mind."

The Other Man's hand met his, more than half-way.

"And," continued the war correspondent, "I want to apologise. I 've been all kinds of a brute, but what I said was the truth. I love her as no man ever before loved a woman. That 's my only excuse."

"You 're not to blame for loving her," returned the Other Man generously; "nobody is. And as for her loving you, that 's all right too. She 's got a lot of temperament and she 's used to being loved, and you 're not a bad sort, you

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know—not at all." And he concluded fondly, "my little girl was lonesome without me."

The war correspondent went away quietly. In the moonlight he could see the boyish face of the Other Man, radiant with an all-believing, all-forgiving love.

"Yes," said the Other Man again, after an interval, and not realising that he was alone, "that was it. My little girl was lonesome without me."

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The Roses and the Song

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The Roses and the Song

THERE had been a lover's quarrel and she had given him back his ring. He thrust it into his pocket and said, unconcernedly, that there were other girls who would be glad to wear it.

Her face flushed, whether in anger or pain he did not know, but she made no reply. And he left her exulting in the thought that the old love was dead.

As the days went by, he began to miss her. First, when his chum died in a far-off country, with no friend near. He remembered with a pang how sweetly comforting she had always been, never asking questions, but soothing his irritation and trouble with her gentle womanly sympathy.

He knew just what she would do if he could tell her that Tom was dead. She would put her soft cheek against his own rough one, and say: "I am so sorry dear. I'm not much, I know, but you 've got me,

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and nothing, not even death can change that."

"Not even death"—yes, it was quite true. Death changes nothing.—It is only life that separates utterly.

He began to miss the afternoon walks, the lingering in book store and art galleries, and the quiet evenings at home over the blazing fire, when he sat with his arm around her and told her how he had spent the time since they last met. Every thought was in some way of her, and the emptiness of his heart without her seemed strange in connection with the fact that the old love was dead.

He saw by a morning paper that there was to be a concert for the benefit of some charitable institution, and on the program, printed beneath the announcement, was her name. He smiled grimly. How often he had gone with her when she sang in public! He remembered every little detail of every evening. He always waited behind the scenes, because she said she could sing better when he was near her. And whatever the critics might say, she was sure of his praise.

It was on the way home from one of these affairs that he had first told her that

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he loved her. Through the rose-leaf rain that fell from her hair and bosom at his touch he had kissed her for the first time, and the thrill of her sweet lips was with him still. How short the ride had been that night and why was the coachman in such an unreasonable hurry to get home?

He made up his mind that he would not go to the concert that night, but somehow, he bought a ticket and was there before the doors opened. So he went out to walk around a little. People who went to concerts early were his especial detestation.

In a florist's window he saw some unusually beautiful roses. He had always sent her roses before, to match her gown, and it seemed queer not to buy them for her now.

Perhaps he really ought to send her some to show her that he cherished no resentment. Anyone could send her flowers over the footlights. The other men that she knew would undoubtedly remember her, and he did n't want to seem unfriendly.

So he went in. "Four dozen La France roses," he said, and the clerk speedily made the selection. He took a card out of his pocket, and chewed the end of his pencil meditatively.

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It was strange that he should have selected that particular kind, he thought. That other night, after he had gone home, he had found a solitary pink petal clinging to his scarf-pin. He remembered with a flush of tenderness that it had come from one of the roses—his roses—on her breast. He had kissed it passionately and hidden it in a book—a little book which she had given him.

With memory came heartache, his empty life and her wounded love. The words shaped themselves under his pencil:

"You know what the roses mean. Will you wear one when you sing the second time? Forgive me and love me again—my sweetheart."

He tied the card himself into the centre of the bunch, so it was half hidden by the flowers. He gave them to the usher with a queer tremolo note in his voice. "After her first number, understand?"

There was a piano solo, and then she appeared. What she sang he did not know, but her deep contralto, holding heaven in its tones, he both knew and understood. She did not sing as well as usual. Her voice lacked warmth and sincerity and her intonation was faulty.

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The applause was loud but not spontaneous although many of her friends were there. His were the only flowers she received.

When she came out the second time, he looked at her anxiously, but there was never a sign of a rose. He sank down in his chair with a sigh and covered his face with his hand.

This time she sang as only *she* could sing. Oh, that glorious contralto! Suggestions of twilight and dawn, of suffering and joy, of love and its renunciation.

There was no mistaking her success and the great house rang with plaudits from basement to roof. He, only, was silent; praying in mute agony for a sign.

She willingly responded to the encore and a hush fell upon the audience with the first notes of Tosti's "Good-Bye."

"*Falling leaf, and fading tree.*"

Oh, why should she sing that? He writhed as if in bodily pain, but the beautiful voice went on and on.

"*Good-bye, summer, good-bye, good-bye!*"

How cruel she seemed! Stately, imperious, yet womanly, she held her listeners

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spellbound, but every word cut into his heart like a knife.

"All the to-morrows shall be as to-day."

The tears came and his lips grew white. Then some way into the cruel magnificence of her voice came a hint of pity as she sang:

"Good-bye to hope, good-bye, good-bye!"

There was a hush, then she began again:

"What are we waiting for, Oh, my heart?"
Kiss me straight on the brows, and part!"

All the love in her soul surged into her song; the joy of happy love; the agony of despairing love; the pleading cry of doubting love; the dull suffering of hopeless love; and then her whole strength was merged into a passionate prayer for the lost love, as she sang the last words:

"Good-bye forever, good-bye forever!
Good-bye, good-bye, good—bye—!"

She bowed her acknowledgments again and again, and when the clamour was over, he hastened into the little room behind the stage where she was putting on her

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wraps. She was alone but her carriage was waiting.

As he entered, she started in surprise, then held out her hand.

"Dear," he said, "if this is the end, won't you let me kiss you *once* for the sake of our old happiness? We were so much to each other—you and I. Even if you would n't wear the rose, won't you let me hold you just a minute as I used to do?"

"Wear the rose," she repeated, "what do you mean?"

"Did n't you see my card?"

"No," she answered, "I could n't look at them—they are—La—France—you know—and——"

She reached out trembling fingers and found the card. She read the tender message twice—the little message which meant so much, then looked up into his face.

"If I could," she whispered, "I 'd pin them all on."

Someway she slipped into her rightful place again, and very little was said as they rolled home. But when he lit the gas in his own room he saw something queer in the mirror, and found, clinging to his scarf-pin, the petal of a La France rose.

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A Laggard in Love

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A Laggard in Love

"MY dear," said Edith judiciously, "I think you 're doing wrong."

Marian dabbed her eyes with a very wet handkerchief and said nothing. Edith adjusted the folds of her morning gown and assumed a more comfortable position on the couch.

"They all have to be managed," she went on, "and you 'll find that Mr. Thomas Drayton is no exception. I 'll venture that when he makes his visits, which are like those of angels, 'few and far between' you tell him how lonesome you 've been without him, and how you 've thought of him every minute since the last time, and perhaps even cry a little bit! Am I right?"

Marian nodded. "If it was n't for that hateful Perkins girl, I would n't care so much. She 's neither bright nor pretty, and I 'm sure I don't see what Tom sees in her. I think it 's more her fault than his."

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"The Perkins girl is entirely blameless, Miss Reynolds, though she certainly is unpleasant. It is Tom's fault."

The afflicted Miss Reynolds wiped her eyes again. "Perhaps it's mine. If I were quite what I ought to be, Tom wouldn't seek other society, I'm sure."

Mrs. Bently sat up straight. "Marian Reynolds," she demanded, "have you ever said anything like that to Tom?"

"Something like that," Marian admitted. "What should I have done?"

"Thrown a book at him," responded Mrs. Bently energetically. Then she leaned back among the pillows, and twisted the corners of her handkerchief.

"Don't be horrid, Edith, but tell me what to do," pleaded Marian.

Mrs. Bently looked straight out of the window. "I've been married nearly ten years," she said meditatively, "and I point with pardonable pride to my husband. There has n't been any of the 'other woman business' since the first days of our engagement. He never forgets the little words of endearment, he brings me flowers, and books, and he 's quite as polite to me as he is to other women."

"I know," replied Marian. "I 've seen

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him break away from a crowd in the middle of a sentence to put your rubbers on for you."

"All that," resumed Edith, "is the result of careful training. And what Tom needs is heroic treatment. If you will promise to do exactly as I say, you will have his entire devotion inside of a month."

"I promise," responded Marian hopefully.

"First, then, take off your engagement ring."

Marian's pretty brown head drooped lower and lower, and a brighter diamond fell into her lap. She felt again the passionate tenderness in his voice when he told her how much he loved her, and she remembered how he had kissed each finger-tip separately, then the diamond, just because it was hers.

She looked at her friend with eyes full of tears. "Edith, I can't."

"Take it off."

Marian obeyed, very slowly, then threw herself at the side of the couch sobbing. "Edith, Edith," she cried, "don't be so cross to me! I am so dreadfully unhappy!"

"Marian, dearest, I 'm not cross, but I want you to be a sensible girl. The

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happiness of your whole life is at stake, and I want you to be brave—it is now or never with Mr. Thomas Drayton. If you let him torture you now for his own amusement, he will do it all his life!"

"I'll try, Edith, but you don't know how it hurts."

"Yes, I do know, dear; I've been through it myself. Now listen. First, no more tears or reproaches. Secondly, don't allude to his absence, nor to the Perkins girl. Thirdly, you must find some one else at once."

"That's as bad as what he is doing, is n't it?"

"*Similia similibus curantur*," laughed Edith. "Joe's friend, Jackson, is coming to the city for a month or so, and he'll do nicely. He's awfully handsome, and a perfectly outrageous flirt. He always singles out one girl, however, and devotes himself to her, so we won't have any trouble on that score. People who don't know Jackson, think that he's in deadly earnest, but I don't believe he ever had a serious thought in his life."

"I think I have seen him," said Marian. "Was n't he at the Charity Ball with you and Mr. Bently last year?"

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"Yes, he was there, but only for a few minutes. Now, let 's see—to-day is Thursday. Have you seen Tom this week?"

Marian hesitated. "N-no, that is, not since Sunday. But I think he will come this afternoon."

"Very well, my dear, you have an engagement for the rest of the day with me. Run home and put on your prettiest gown. We 'll go to the Art Gallery and call on Mrs. Kean later. We both owe her a call, and I 'll look for you at two."

Promptly at two o'clock Marian appeared with all traces of tears smoothed away. "You 'll do," said Edith. "I believe you 're a thoroughbred after all."

At the Art Gallery they met what Mrs. Bently termed "the insufferable Perkins" clad in four different colours and looking for all the world like a poster. She was extremely pleasant, and insisted upon showing them a picture which was "one of Mr. Drayton's favourites."

Miss Reynolds adjusted her lorgnette critically. "Yes, I think this is about the only picture in this exhibit which Tom and I both like. I 'm so glad that you approve of our taste, Miss Perkins," and Marian smiled sweetly.

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Edith squeezed her arm rapturously as they moved away. "I 'm proud of you. Those pictures were hung only day before yesterday. Why, there 's Joe."

Mr. Bently greeted them cordially. "Jackson came this morning, Edith, and I have asked him to dine with us Monday evening."

"That will be charming. Marian is coming to visit us over Sunday and I think they will like each other."

"I hope so," was Mr. Bently's rejoinder. "It 's really good of you to come, Miss Reynolds, for I very seldom see you, and Jackson is a capital fellow."

"Come, Marian," said Edith, "you know we were going to make a call."

"Always going somewhere, aren't you, sweetheart?" and Mr. Bently smiled lovingly at his pretty wife.

"Never far away from you, dear," she answered and waved her hand to him as the crowd swept them apart.

"You 're going to stay all night with me, you know," Edith said. "We 'll stop at your house on our way back, and leave word with your mother—incidentally we can learn if any one has called."

It was almost dark when they reached

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Marian's home, and Edith waited in the hall, while she went in search of her mother. As she came down-stairs, Mrs. Bently held up a small white card, triumphantly. Marian's face flushed as she saw the name.

"*Mr. Thomas E. Drayton.*"

"It 's all right," said her friend, "just wait and see."

Friday morning, the servant who admitted Marian, said that Mr. Drayton had called the previous evening and left some flowers which Miss Reynolds would find in the library.

A great bunch of American Beauties stood on the table. and almost overpowered her with their fragrance.

"Dear, dear Tom! He *does* love me," she thought. "I 'll write him a note."

She sat down to her desk without removing her hat. "Perhaps I 've been mistaken all along." The words shaped themselves under her pen: "My Dearest." Then she stopped and surveyed it critically. "Not in the present incarnation of Miss Reynolds." She tore the sheet straight across, and dropped it into the waste basket. Taking another, she wrote:

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"MY DEAR TOM:

"The roses are beautiful. I am passionately fond of flowers—of roses especially, and I must thank you for the really great pleasure the 'Beauties' are giving me.

"Sincerely yours,

"MARIAN REYNOLDS."

Over his coffee the next morning Tom studied the little note. "I wonder what 's the matter. 'My Dear Tom'! 'Marian Reynolds' and not a bit of love in it. It is n't the least bit like her. I must go and see her this afternoon. No, I 'll be hanged if I will, she had no business to be out," and he chewed a toothpick savagely. "I 'll ask her to go to the theatre."

After much cogitation, he evolved a note which struck him as being a marvel of diplomacy.

"MY DEAR MARIAN:

"I am glad the roses give you pleasure. Will you go to the theatre with me on Monday evening?

"Yours in haste,

"TOM."

Marian's reply was equally concise:

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"My dear Tom:

"I am very sorry that I have an engagement for Monday evening and cannot possibly break it. You know I enjoy the theatre above all things, and I am sure I should have an especially pleasant evening with you.

"Sincerely,

"Marian Reynolds."

Tom grew decidedly uncomfortable. What the mischief was the matter with the girl! One thing was certain, next time he called, it would be at her invitation. But the following afternoon found him again at the house.

"Miss Reynolds is out, sir," said the servant as he opened the door, in response to his ring.

"I know," he responded impatiently; "I want to return a book I borrowed the other day."

"Certainly, sir," and the servant ushered him into the library.

He put the book in its place, and his glance, travelling downward met the waste basket. Marian's distinctive penmanship stared him in the face. "My Dearest!"

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Mr. Thomas Drayton was an honourable gentleman, but he wanted to examine that waste-paper basket. He rushed out of the library, lest he should yield to the temptation, and said to the servant in the hall: "Say nothing of my having been here to-day, Jones."

"Certainly not, sir."

"The book is a joke on Miss Reynolds," he said putting a silver half dollar in Jones's ready palm.

"All right, sir, I see." And Tom went out.

Before he reached the avenue, he was mentally kicking himself for explaining to a servant. He had of course noticed the roses on the table, and he was very sure they had not been in Marian's room.

Once she had told him, how she had slept with one of the roses next her heart, and a thorn had pricked the flesh, making a red spot on a white petal. She showed him the rose with its tiny blood stain. He had kissed the flower and put it in a little memorandum book with a gold clasp. And he had told Marian, over and over again, what a horrid rose it was—to hurt his sweetheart. He smiled grimly at his own previous foolishness, and felt sure

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that none of the American Beauties would rest next to Marian's heart that night.

Miss Reynolds and Mrs. Bently sat in the latter's boudoir. Edith nodded sagely over Tom's note, and Marian was curled up in a forlorn heap on the couch.

"How does he usually begin his notes to you?"

"'My Dearest Girl,' or 'Dear Sweetheart,'" answered Marian.

"H'm! Well, my dear, you may depend upon it, he is 'beginning to take notice.'"

Sunday, Tom spent morosely at his club, and was so disagreeable that his friends were very willing to give him a wide berth. Marian was neither cheerful nor happy, and wept copiously in private, fancying Tom worshipping at the shrine of Miss Perkins.

Monday evening she and Edith dressed together. Marian had a new gown of that peculiar shade of blue which seems to be especially made for brown eyes and hair, and looked, as her friend told her, "simply stunning."

"Joe has a box at the theatre to-night. Is n't he lovely?"

Marian assented, but inwardly hoped that Tom would not hear of her being there.

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Mr. Sterling Jackson was a very pleasant fellow, with an inexhaustible fund of humour. He devoted himself to Marian and looked unutterable things whenever opportunity offered. Handsome, he certainly was, and she was secretly flattered by his evident adoration. Tom did n't matter quite so much now.

At the theatre Marian sat in the front of an upper box beside Mrs. Bently. The devoted Jackson leaned forward and talked to her in subdued tones. After the first act, Edith whispered to her:

"Don't look, nor turn pale, nor do anything rash, but Mr. Thomas Drayton is down in the parquet with Miss Matilda Perkins." Marian turned white and grasped the rail of the box. "Don't faint till I tell you. He has n't taken his eyes off you since he first saw you, and I don't believe he has seen the stage at all. Perkins is simply green with rage, and I wish you could see her hat. It 's a dream in pink and yellow—an equine dream."

Marian's colour returned, and conscious of looking her best, she flirted outrageously with the ever willing Jackson, though she confided to Edith at the end of the second act, that she was "perfectly wretched."

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"Nobody suspects it," returned Mrs. Bently, "least of all Tom. He 's chewing Perkins's fan, and she 's trying to draw him out."

For the remainder of the week Mr. Drayton studiously avoided the Reynolds mansion. Marian had been seen on the Boulevard with the odious Jackson, and Miss Perkins had suddenly lost her charm. Marian was always at home on Tuesdays. Next week he would drop in, in the afternoon, and see how the land lay.

Mrs. Bently had heard, through her husband, that Drayton had gone out of the city, and the intelligence was promptly conveyed to Marian

The solitaire lay in a corner of Marian's chatelaine bag. She meditated the propriety of sending it back, but Edith would not hear of it. Her heart ached constantly for Tom, and she flirted feverishly with Jackson. "I am at home Tuesdays," she said one evening when he left her. "Come in for a little while and I will give you a cup of tea."

He came early and found her alone. They chatted for a few minutes, and then Mr. Thomas Drayton was announced. The two men were civil to each other, but

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Marian felt their mutual irritation, and was relieved when Jackson rose to take his departure. He crossed the room to Tom and shook hands. "I am very glad to have met you, Mr. Drayton. I am sure we shall meet often, if you find Miss Reynolds as charming as I do." He bowed politely to Marian and went out.

"The insufferable cad!" thought Tom. He shivered, and Marian hastened to the tea table.

"It 's awfully cold outside," she said, and these rooms are not any too warm. I 'll make you some tea. You take two lumps of sugar, don't you?"

Tom said nothing. Marian's pretty hands hovered over the teacups, and he noticed that the left one was ringless.

"Don't you wear your solitaire any more, Marian?" His voice was strange and she was half afraid.

"Oh, yes," she responded brightly, "sometimes. The points of the setting catch in my glove though, and I am afraid of loosening the stone."

"Marian, don't you care for me?"

"Certainly."

"How much?"

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"As much as you care for me, I think, don't you?"

He went over and put his arm around her. She shrank a little at his touch, but he pulled her down on the sofa beside him.

"Marian, darling, tell me what the matter is. I know I don't deserve you, and I 'll go, if you say I must. Has that fellow Jackson come between us?"

Marian disregarded one of Edith's injunctions. "Perhaps it 's Miss Perkins."

Tom said a very emphatic swear word, which does not look well in print, then buried his head in one of the sofa cushions. She was frightened and sank down on her knees beside him, her armor of self-defence vanishing in womanly pity. "Tom, dear Tom! What is it? Tell me!"

He straightened up and lifted her to the sofa beside him.

"I see, sweetheart, I 've been a fool and a great deal worse than that. Can you ever forgive me?"

"One thing first, Tom, do you love me?"

"Marian, dear, I never knew until this last wretched week, just how much you meant to me. I am yours, body and soul, to do with what you will. I have no right

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to insult you, Mar
me back?" His v
agony of love and
solitaire out of the
belt. She held it
"Darling, is it
"No, dear, I w
And that eve
instructions, the
Sterling Jackson

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Träumerei

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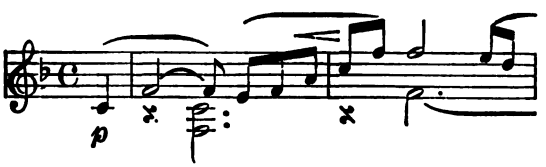
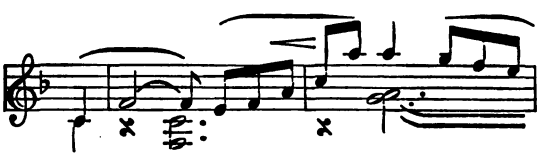
fashionables he saw a face that he knew—that he had known.

A sweet face it was too; not beautiful, but full of subtle charm and a haunting tenderness that he had tried to forget. He sat like one in a dream, and did not know that the orchestra was about to play the next number till its opening measures woke him from his abstraction.



Träumerei! Anything but that! Oh, God, this needless pain! And he thought he had forgotten!



He stood again in a little room which the autumn moonlight made as bright as day. Down below on the rocks was the far-off sound of the sea, and she, with his roses on her breast, sat before the piano and played dreamily, tenderly, yes, this

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same Träumerei that was now breaking his heart.

He had stood behind her, with his arms around her, his dark, eager face down close to hers, and whispered huskily: "Sweetheart, I love you."

And she had turned her face up to his and said, softly, "I love—you—too—dear;" and he had hugged her tightly to him and covered her face with burning kisses that were almost pain. And—that—had—been—their—betrothal. Then for a little while there was happiness—then there was a misunderstanding—and there—she was—and——

Up through those arches of light the clear, sweet melody stole. Had he forgotten? Had she? He seized his opera-glass and a quick turn of the screw brought her again close to him.

Yes, there were tears in her eyes; he could see the white lids quiver, and her lips trembled and——

With a deeper throb of pain than any he yet had known, the buried love came back, strong and sweet, as in those dear days when the whole world seemed aglow with love of her.

He rose and walked nervously around

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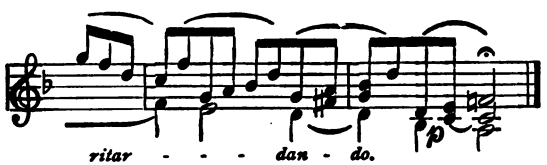
the shining circle and down the aisle to where she sat. His breath came quick and fast, he hardly dared trust himself to speak, but with a great effort he commanded himself and bent over her chair.

She looked up and her tear-wet eyes met his own. He whispered, hoarsely, "Forgive me—come out a minute—I want to speak to you."

Hardly knowing what she did, she followed him into the dimly lighted, deserted foyer.



With the last strain of that wordless love-sweet song, the dear old dream came back and, unrebuked, he put his arm about her once more.

"Sweetheart," he said, "I love you."

A soft arm stole round his neck, and she answered as of old,

"I love you, too, dear."

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"Swing Low, Sweet Chariot"

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"Swing Low, Sweet Chariot"

DOWN in the negro quarters on a Georgia plantation stood a quaint little log cabin overlooking cotton fields that were white with their snowy fruit. Born in slavery, living in slavery and apparently destined to die in slavery, yet old Joe was happy; for to him slavery was not bondage —only a pleasant way of being cared for.

His days of active usefulness were over. He had served long and faithfully in those same cotton fields, then as a house servant and later as a coachman. Now on account of age and the "misery" in his back, he spent his days in mending harness, telling stories to the children and making playthings out of the odd bits of rubbish they brought him.

His wife, Sally, was head cook at the mansion which stood in another part of the plantation, in the midst of trees and flowers. Down a little farther was a tiny brook that sang all the livelong day and

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"Swing Low, Sweet Chariot"

turned back, regretfully perhaps, to wind by the window of old Joe's cabin.

"The Pines" was a most hospitable house and usually thronged with guests, for its young mistress had an indulgent husband and money sufficient to gratify every possible whim. Mrs. Langley she was now, but to old Joe she would be "Miss Eunice" always. He had carried her when she was a baby, watched over her when she was ill, and once when a pair of maddened horses dashed down the drive, utterly beyond their owner's control, he had snatched the unconscious child from almost under the wild feet, and—saved her life, they said, but the brave fellow had received internal injuries and had not been able to do much since.

"Yes," he said one afternoon, to an appreciative audience of pickaninnies and white children who sat together around his feet in a truly democratic fashion, "dat ar day war a great time fo ol Joe. I war jes agwine to de house wen I see dese yer hosses comin *ker-blip!* right whar Miss Eunice war a playin wid her doll-buggy. Dere was n't no time to call her, so I jes grab her and run, an my foot ketch in de doll-buggy an I trow Miss Eunice

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ober my haid in some soft grass an den de hosses tram on me an I kinder lost my 'membunce. Pretty soon I fin mysel in de house an de doctor an ol Missis war a standin ober me. Doctor say, 'he come to all right,' an ol Missis, she jes stoop down an kiss ol Joe! Tink ob dat!"

"Den Miss Eunice come in, an ol Missis say 'come here dear, and see Uncle Joe. He done sabe yo life.' An den I lose my 'membunce again. One day Mas'r walk in an he say, 'Joe, here's yo papers, yo's free now, jus ez free ez I is.' I say Mas'r, I don't want to go away from you an Missis an Miss Eunice. I want to stay here on de ol plantation, along 'o my ol woman. And den he wipe is eyes an say, 'I'll gib Sally papers too' an Sally say, 'No Mas'r, me an Joe don't want to be free; we wants to stay here where we's happies' an Mas'r say he keep dose yer papers for us till we done want em. Dose was mighty fine times for ol Joe!" and he beamed at the children around his feet who had been listening with ever-fresh delight to the old, old story.

"Now play something, Uncle," the children cried, and Tommy Langley brought the fiddle that always hung in

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"Swing Low, Sweet Chariot"

one corner of the cabin. His eyes brightened at the sight of the old brown thing, but he gently put the eager child away, saying, "No, honey, not dis time. I got de misery in my back wuss en eber. Go way, chillens, ol Joe's—so tired!"

They obediently trooped out of the cabin and the old man's head dropped on his breast. The gaunt grey figure twisted with pain, and he did not move until Sally came in to get his supper.

"Well, honey," she said cheerily, "how's yo back to-day?"

"Pears like de pain gets wuss, Sally," he replied.

"Nebber yo min, yo'll get better byme by." Coming closer she dropped a bundle of illustrated papers into his lap. "See wat Miss Eunice send yo, an look here!" She pointed proudly to her stooped shoulders, where a scarlet kerchief shone like a ray of light in the dim cabin.

Joe tried to smile, then said feebly, "Miss Eunice mighty good to us, Sally."

Sally assented, and moving quickly about the cabin, soon had the evening meal on the table.

"Come, Joe, move up yo cheer. Dis yere hoe cake done to de tu'n!"

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"Pears like I could n't eat no supper," he said, then gave a half-suppressed groan that betokened an extra twinge of the "misery."

"Po ol man," said Sally sympathetically, and she ate in silence, watching the kindly pain-drawn face, with ever-increasing anxiety.

As twilight fell, the sufferer sought his couch, where he moaned and tossed restlessly, and the pitying Sally, stretched wearily on a faded rug near the door was soon fast asleep.

. . . . . .

Up at "The Pines" all was light and laughter and music, for a crowd of young folks were gathered 'neath its hospitable roof and guitars and mandolins made the whole house ring with melody of a more or less penetrating quality. In the midst of the gaiety, Tommy stole up to his mother with a troubled look on his usually merry little face.

"What is it, dearie?" she asked, putting her arm about him.

"Mamma, I 'm afraid Uncle Joe is going to die. His 'misery' hurts him awful."

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"Swing Low, Sweet Chariot"

"Is Uncle Joe very sick, dear? I knew he was not well, but he has always been ailing, you know. I 'll have the doctor see him to-morrow."

"All right, mamma," and the little face grew bright again.

She kissed him tenderly and said: "Run away to bed, little son, the birds went long ago."

Tommy went off obediently, but Mrs. Langley felt worried about the faithful old fellow who had saved her life. "I 'll see to him to-morrow," she thought and began to plan various things for his comfort and happiness.

A little later a pretty girl with a mandolin, said: "Do you know I feel like having a lark. Excuse the slang, please, but there 's no other word that will express my meaning."

"Try a swallow," suggested a young man in a way that was meant to be funny. "There 's lots of lemonade left in the pitcher."

She scorned the interruption. "I want a lark, a regular lark!"

"How would a serenade do?"

"Capital!" she laughed. "Just the thing! We 'll take our mandolins and

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guitars into the moonlight and make things pleasant generally."

"But," said a maid with a practical turn of mind, "who is there to serenade? There are n't any neighbours, are there?"

"Give it up!"

"Ask Mrs. Langley—she 'll know," and a smiling ambassador from the merry group, Mrs. Langley's own nephew, went to the fair-haired hostess who sat with her husband in the library.

"Aunty, who is there in this charming spot whom we can serenade? The girls think it would be fun, but we don't know where to find a victim in this isolated Eden."

Mrs. Langley rose quickly, and going to the little party, told them of old Joe and how she owed her life to those strong arms. She finished the story with an eloquent gesture that brought tears to the eyes of many, and added: "Go down to the old man's cabin and sing the quaint negro melodies he loves so well—that he used to sing to me when I was a little child. And take these roses with you; he used to love them so; you can throw them in at the open window."

As she spoke, she took a great handful

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"Swing Low, Sweet Chariot"

of white roses from a vase and with a little pearl-handled knife, dextrously removed the thorns, then handed them to her nephew.

"How do we get there, Aunty?" he asked, with something like a tremor in his voice.

"Follow the brook," she replied. "It flows right under his window, and you cannot miss the place. I 'd go with you, only I can't sing, and would n't be of any use." She smiled brightly at them as they went down among the shadows, then to the tiny brook that seemed like a musical stream of silver in the moonlight.

The party was strangely silent for one bound for a "lark," and by much crossing of the little stream that wound its tortuous way through the grounds, they came to Uncle Joe's tiny cabin in an unseen nook of the plantation. They grouped themselves under the window in silence.

"Now then!" whispered one of them. The mandolins and guitars played the opening strains of the sweet old melody, then their fresh young voices rose high and clear:

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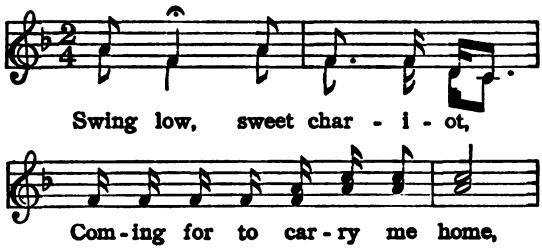
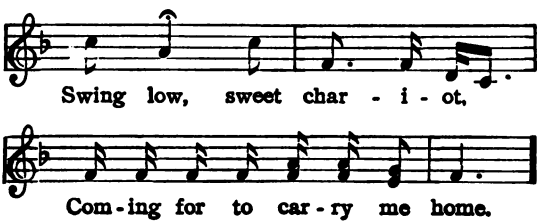
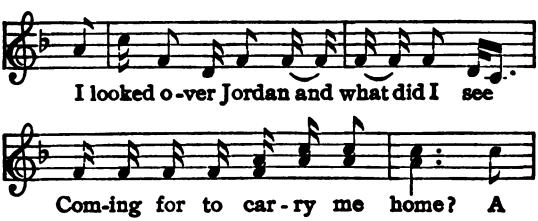


The old grey head turned feebly on its hard pillow, and Sally stirred restlessly.



Above the song of the brook that seemed like a tender accompaniment to the tinkle of the mandolins the music rose, and old Joe woke from his dream of pain.



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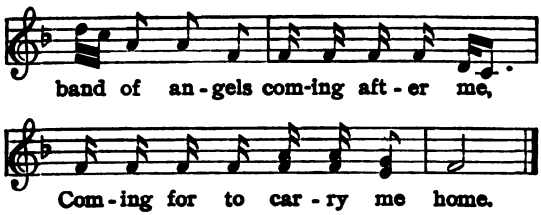
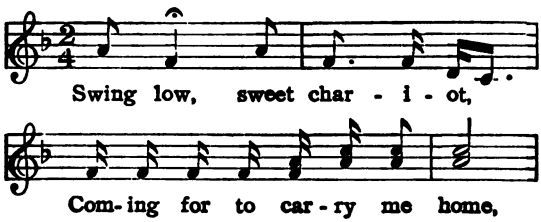
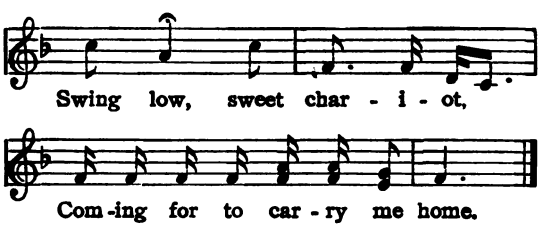
"Swing Low, Sweet Chariot"



Oh, light of the angels! Oh, rapture of the song! The familiar words brought back so much to the old man's listening soul!



The fragrant shower fell around him. He grasped a great white rose that was within reach of his hand and pressed it to his parched lips.



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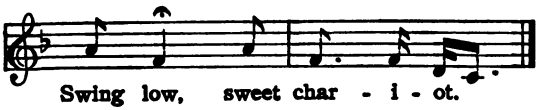
Out of the clouds was the chariot coming for *him?* Yes—wrapt in celestial glory.



The song died away, and the singers heard no sound within.

But the tired head fell back upon its pillow with a sigh of infinite content, the chariot came, and Uncle Joe forgot the "misery" and the roses alike in passing from supreme shadow to supreme dawn.

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The Face of the Master

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The Face of the Master

IN a little town in Italy, there once lived an old violin maker, whose sole pride and happiness was in the perfect instruments which he had made. He had, indeed, a son, or rather a stepson, for his wife had been a pretty widow with this one child when he married her a year before.

Pedro was a dark little fellow, with great deep eyes which seemed to hold a world of feeling and sometimes sadness. He idolised his mother, but shrank from his father with a feeling of instinctive dislike. Perhaps the old man noticed this, though he was so absorbed in his work and in directing his careless assistants that he seemed entirely oblivious to his surroundings.

The child was errand-boy for the little shop, and all his tasks were patiently and cheerfully done. Occasionally, one of the workmen would pat him on the head, and he distinctly remembered one

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day when the lady next door, gave him a piece of candy.

Before he and his mother came to live in the little shop, he had never seen a violin, and even now he could not be said to have heard one, for neither his father nor any of the workmen knew how to play; —they were quite content with putting the bridge in place, leaving the strings to be adjusted in the neighbouring town where the instruments found a ready sale.

One day, the last touch was given to an unusually fine instrument, and in a moment of pride, the old man fitted it with strings. He placed it under his chin and touched the strings softly with the bow. Faulty though the touch was, the answer was melody—a long sweet chord.

Pedro's eyes grew darker, and his little face was fearlessly upturned to the man who held the singer of that wonderful song. In the ecstasy of the moment, his foot touched a valuable piece of wood upon the floor.

Crack! It became two pieces instead of one, and with a curse and a blow, the trembling child was pushed, head foremost, into his own little room. A moment later he heard the key turn in the lock. Pale

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and frightened, he sank into a corner, but the memory of the sweetness was with him still and in his soul was the dawn of unspeakable light.

All was silent in the shop now, but shortly he heard the busy hum of voices and the old confused sound. Then above the din, the violin sounded again. He listened in wonder. That single chord had been a revelation, and as a sculptor sees in a formless stone the future realisation of a marble dream, so Pedro, guided unerringly by that faulty strain, saw through break and discord, the promise of a symphony.

He fell asleep that night haunted still by that strange sweet sound, and dreamed that it had been his fingers to which the strings had answered. *His* fingers? He awoke with an intense longing in his childish breast. Oh, to touch that dear brown thing! Oh, to hear again the whisper of the music!

Though the sun had risen he was still in a dream, and, mingled with the notes of the lark above his window, was the voice of the violin.

Presently his stepfather appeared in the door-way, and with more than ususal

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unkindness in his tone ordered him away on an errand. Pedro gladly went, and all that day tried ineffectually to conciliate the angry man by patience, gentleness, and obedience. Night came, and though weary, he was sent on a still longer journey. He started with an important message from his father to the home of the man who was to furnish wood for a lot of new violins. He had often been to the shop, but it was late now, the man must have gone home, and his house was much farther away.

He dared not complain, however, and trudged wearily on. But with all his fatigue, his heart was light, for he fancied there might be music in the home toward which he was hastening. Some day, perhaps, he might hear the blessed chords again! He would wait. Through his childish fancy flitted a dream of a symphony —the unthought melody which might be sleeping in those broken chords.

He delivered his message safely, and the man kindly showed him a short cut home. It was very late, and the streets were still, but he was not afraid. He passed house after house that was gayly lighted, and looked longingly at the revelry within,

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but he hurried onward till he came to a little house in a side street.

Hark! He stopped suddenly. Out of the darkness came the sound of music—was it a violin? Yes, no, it could not be. He crept closer to the cottage. Then a burst of harmony came into his consciousness—long, sweet, silvery notes; a glad rush of sound that brought tears to his eyes—a delicate half hushed whisper, and then the twinkle of a brook, with the twilight gentleness of a shadow. Clearer and stronger the music grew, and the child's breath came in quick, short gasps. The brook was a river now, he could hear the swaying of the trees in the forest; the heart of the wind was in the music, and on it swept in glad resistless cadence, from the brook to the river, then down to the sea. A pause, a long low note, then a glorious vision of blue, as into the rush of the song, there came the sweet, unutterable harmonies of the ocean.

He was in ecstasy; he scarcely dared to move. Oh, could he but see whence the music came! Could he look for a moment only, upon the face of the master! The moon came out from behind a cloud, and the child looked up. At the open window

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he saw an old man with deep-set eyes, a kindly smile, and long white hair that hung down to his shoulders. He held a violin in his hand, but the picture needed not this touch to tell the child who it was that had made this wonderful music, for he felt that he now looked upon the face of the master.

With a sigh, the old man again placed the instrument in position, and drew the bow across the strings. The boy trembled. In slow, measured sweetness the music came—a deep wonderful harmony that held him spell-bound. There was a tender cadence that swayed the player's soul, and into the theme crept the passionate pain of one who had loved and lost.

The child knew that the man was suffering—that music like that could only come from an aching heart. With double notes, in a minor key, the master played on; then the violin slipped to the floor unheeded, and the old man laid his head on the window sill, and wept like a child.

Pedro crept away; he could bear no more. The glory had entered into his soul. He went noiselessly to bed, but he heard still that marvellous music and saw again the pain-shadowed face of the master.

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Oh, could he but touch the magic strings! Could he but play one note of the wondrous song! An idea seized him—he would try sometime. In a transport of joy he fell asleep, and dreamed all night long of the heavenly strains. He saw the clear deep blue of the ocean, he heard the wind symphonies in the forest, and always, too, before him was that white suffering face.

The next day he was scarcely himself. He moved about as if he still slept, while his eyes were unusually sad and thoughtful. At night he could not sleep, and after making sure that every one else was in deep slumber, he slipped quietly out into the shop. The moon showed him where to go, and at length he picked up the new violin which had taken so long to finish, and which was the finest his father had ever made. Where should he go? Outdoors, assuredly. He went softly out into the moonlight and down to the brook which was some distance from the house.

The silence, the beauty, the witchery of it all, was overwhelming. A gentle breeze swayed the tree tops, and, from the instrument in his hand, drew forth Æolian music. He started, placed it in position,

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and drew the bow across the wind-swept strings. His touch awakened the sleeping voice, and through his soul surged again the long, sweet chords that had made him glad, and shown him through the broken bits of melody, the grandeur of the symphony. Tenderly, tremblingly, he touched the strings again, and another chord, a minor, struck deep into his heart.

Without thought or knowledge of the art he still blundered on, knowing naught save that it was *his* fingers that made a wild, delirious, rapturous sound, and seeing only the remembered vision of the master's face.

Conscious of nothing else, he did not see that the sun had risen. Suddenly he looked up. His father stood before him with a strange expression on his face. The terrified child dropped the instrument to ward off a blow, but the father said, with a tremor in his voice: "Is it so, my boy? Are you then a musician? You shall have lessons; I shall give you a violin; we go to-day to see the master. Ah, the music! It is most wonderful!"

The boy was dumb with astonishment. To learn? And who was the master? That afternoon he dressed himself in his

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best garments, which were worn only on festal occasions, and with his father went on the gladdest errand of his life.

The master! Could it be? The child's heart almost stopped beating. Yes, down the little street they turned and went up to the door of the cottage. He could not speak.

Presently he found himself in a plainly furnished little room, and heard footsteps in the hall. The door opened, and Pedro looked up to see those deep-set eyes that seemed to smile down at him.

The father rose, and bowing low, he said: "Signor, I would like my son to play the violin—you are a teacher—he will be a musician. I have no money, Signor, but if you teach my boy how to play, I will make you a violin—the finest in the world."

The master was about to refuse; his old violin was a good one, and he did not like to teach. He turned away hastily, but he caught a glimpse of the child's uplifted face. His soul was in his eyes, and in their depths the great artist saw an unutterable longing. He was touched. "Child," he said, "would you like to play?"

He laid his hand on the boy's shoulder. The touch and the kindly tone thrilled

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him unspeakably. To play? To hear again that infinite music? Glad tears rushed to his eyes and his only answer was a sob.

"Ah, yes," the man's voice was tender. "You love it; I will teach you. Come to-morrow at this hour and we shall begin."

Pedro went home, wild with delight. To play! To see the master's face! Ah, it was too much! All night long he dreamed of that delicious melody, and the dear old head with its crown of silver hair that seemed like a benediction.

His father gave him a little old violin. To him? Was it all his own? "And when you can play, my boy," he said, "you shall have the 'Beauty'."

Pedro's first lessons were a revelation. His face was a study for a painter, and the teacher saw that he had before him the promise of an artist. He gave himself willingly to the task and soon learned to dearly love his eager pupil.

And Pedro? No task was too hard, no study too difficult, no practice too long and tedious, if he might please his good old friend; and even while he struggled with the difficulties of technique, he never lost

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hope or patience, for before him always like a guiding star, was the serene white face of the master.

So the years went by, and all Italy was being searched for the finest wood that grew—for the sharpest tools. The wood for the master's violin must be well seasoned—it would take a long time—the longer, the better. For centuries the old tree had listened to wind, and river, and bird; the sounds of the forest were interwoven with its fibre, and now it must give up its buried music in answer to the strings of the violin.

The childish stature was changed to that of manhood, and still the teacher found in Pedro a devoted pupil. The youth had developed in many ways, but the artist seemed to be little changed. A little more bent, perhaps, but the same sweet soul.

Pedro had the "Beauty" but the master's violin was not yet finished. He never asked for it, never spoke of it; in the delight of Pedro's achievement and greater promise, perhaps he had forgotten the promise of the old violin maker.

But the old man was growing feeble. A change was coming and the young man

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felt it too. He went one day for his lesson, and the housekeeper met him at the door with her finger on her lip. Hush! The teacher was ill. But he would like to see Pedro for a few minutes.

He went in and spoke tenderly to the old friend, whose eyes shone with so much love for his pupil—his boy—as he still called him. Pedro could not stay long—it was too sad, and the tears were choking his utterance. He went home with a sorrow-laden heart.

His father said to him as he entered: "The master's violin is at last finished, my son. See?"

He held up a beautifully fashioned instrument.

"You shall take it to him to-morrow. Ah, its tone! You will play?"

"No, father, I cannot. The master, he is ill—dying—perhaps. Oh! I cannot."

The old violin maker laid the instrument gently in its case. There were tears in his own eyes—"The teacher! Well, we must all die," and he turned to his work.

Night came, and Pedro tossed restlessly on his couch. About midnight there was a rap on the front door of the shop.

He went quietly and opened it. There

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was a messenger from the old housekeeper. The teacher was sinking fast. The physician said he could not last until morning. He was out of pain, and he knew the end was near. Would Pedro come and play for him? The night seemed so long! Pedro dressed himself hurriedly. Oh, if he should be too late! As he went through the shop he passed the table where lay the master's violin. A sob came into his throat as he lifted it from the case. He would play that.

Out into the still street he went with almost breathless haste. The moon shone gloriously, and the air was sweet with spring. He reached the cottage and went softly into the little room at the end of the hall where the man lay, looking like a piece of marble statuary, but still breathing. Pedro bent over him and looked lovingly into his face.

The master spoke with difficulty—"You are come, then, my friend—my boy?" The same old tenderness! Pedro could not answer. "You will play to me? The end is so near, the night seems so long—play to me, my boy."

The feeble man turned his face to the open window, which was on a level with his

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couch. With a sigh of content, he laid his head upon the sill. Pedro started. The position, the moonlight, oh, that far-off night! Again he was a child crouching in the darkness, and in the old ecstasy beneath that very window—he heard again that infinitely sad music, and saw again the white suffering face.

He placed the instrument in position; step by step, unerringly, he followed the notes of the marvellous melody, for was not the musician before him, teaching him how to play it?

The grey head turned towards the player—a strange new light in his eyes. But seeing only the vision of his childhood the young man played on and on, and somehow into the symphony crept all the love and sadness of a life time. As he played he threw his whole soul into the music. Oh, the indescribable sweetness of the master's violin! At last his vision faded, and he saw the massive head drop on the same old sill—he heard once more the sobs that come with tears.

The music ended with a broken chord, and he looked up—to find his friend gazing at him with ineffable happiness. "My boy, where did you learn that? It

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is one of my own compositions—I have never written it all down—where—where did you learn it?"

Pedro drew his chair to the couch, and, clasping the withered hand in both his own that were strong and young, and beating with life, he told the story. So long ago that he was but a child, he had heard the artist play it. He had known even then that it was born of sorrow, and to-night that far-off time came back into the moonlight, with the master's face. He had not played from memory only, for the teacher had shown him some of the notes and he had but followed.

The man feebly raised his head and said brokenly: "My boy, you are right; I had a sorrow. You are young, but you will understand."

No longer master and pupil, they were now friend and friend.

"I loved her—the best of all the world. But with the end only, came the peace which had been denied me in life. She loved my music and I played to her when she lay dying. She did not love me as I loved her—I was her friend, always; 'her dear, dear friend,' she used to say.

"But," and the voice grew stronger,

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"my arms were around her when the angels came—with my kisses on her lips she went to her grave—there are violets there—she loved them so—for thirty years I have watched them. Her heart has blossomed into them, and they come from her to me.

"She was so pure—so sweet—and her last word was for me. Such a little word! With her last strength, she put her arms around me, and drew my face down to hers—such a little word—it was a whisper —*Sweetheart!* She loved me then—I know she did. Oh, love, could I break the bonds of the grave!" He was silent for a moment. "Now you know—you understand. You will play it again."

The night was deepening toward the dawn. Once more Pedro took the violin —and played the melody, instinct with the old, old story of love and pain. The man's eyes were closed; he lay contentedly and peacefully as a child. As the boy played, the darkness waned, and as he finished, not with a broken chord, but with a minor that some way seemed completion, the first faint lines of light came into the eastern sky.

The master turned to the window again:

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"See, the day breaks." The sky grew gold and crimson, but a more celestial light seemed to live around the grey head, as if, in rifts of heaven, he saw her waiting for him.

He stretched his trembling hands to the east, and whispered: "Yes, I am coming! Coming! You love me then? Ah, yes! Beyond the sunset—the dawn; I am coming—coming—coming—such a little word—*Sweetheart!*"

A look of unspeakable rapture; it was transfiguration; then the deep blue eyes were closed upon the scenes of earth. The first ray of the sun shot into the little room and rested with loving touch upon the couch. The sobbing old housekeeper came toward them, but Pedro motioned her away.

He knelt at the bedside, his own face shining with something of that celestial glow, and man though he was, with quivering lips he kissed again and again the dear white face of the master.

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A Reasonable Courtship

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A Reasonable Courtship

WHEN Tom Elliott graduated from Harvard, that power of the mind which is known as reason had become a fetish with him. Every human action, he argued, should be controlled by it. The majority of people were largely influenced by their feelings; he, Thomas Elliott, twenty-six, good-looking, and fairly wealthy, would turn his mental advantages to good account and be guided wholly by his reason.

He explained his theory to an attractive young woman who had gone out on the veranda with him. Partly because her mind was too much occupied with the speaker to comprehend the full purport of his remarks, and partly because her feminine tact forbade opposition to an unimportant thing, Miss Marshall nodded her pretty head in entire assent.

"It is an assured fact," he went on, "that all the unhappiness in the world is

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caused by the inability to reason. Married life is miserable just because it is not put on a sensible basis. Any two human beings capable of reasoning would be happy together, if that point were kept constantly in view. Perfect, absolute truthfulness, and constant deductions from it, form the only sure foundation for happiness. Am I right?"

She twisted the corners of her handkerchief. "Yes, I think you are."

Elliott paced back and forth with his hands in his pockets—a symptom of nervousness which women mistake for deep thought; "Belle," he said suddenly, "I have always liked you. You have so much more sense than most girls. I am not going to flatter you, but you are the only woman I ever saw who seemed to be a reasonable being. What I want to ask is, will you try it with me?"

Miss Marshall opened her brown eyes in amazement. Since she left boarding-school, the approach of the Elliott planet had materially confused her orbit. She had often dreamed of the offer of Tom's heart and hand, but for once, the consensus of masculine opinion to the contrary, a woman was surprised by a proposal.

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"What on earth do you mean?" she gasped.

"Just this. You and I are congenial, of an equal station in life, and I believe we could be happy together—happier than the average married couple. There's no foolish sentimentality about it; we know each other, and that is enough."

There was a terrific thumping going on in the region where Miss Marshall had mentally located her heart. She took refuge in that platitude of her sex which goads an ordinary lover to desperation.

"This is so sudden, Mr. Elliott! I must take time to consider."

"Very well, take your own time. I 'll be a good husband to you, Belle, if you 'll only give me the chance."

In the solitude of her "den" Belle Marshall gave the matter serious consideration. Safely intrenched behind a formal proposal, she admitted to herself that she loved him—a confession that no woman ever should make until the Rubicon has been crossed. But even the most love-blinded damsel could not transfigure Elliott's demeanour into that of a lover.

Within her reach, in a secret drawer, was a pile of impassioned letters and a withered

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rose; on her desk a photograph of a handsome face, which she had last seen white to the lips with pain. He had called her cruel, and she had smiled faintly at the Harvard pin which she wore, and bade him go.

Then there was another, of whom Belle did not like to think, though she went to his grave sometimes with a remorseful desire to make some sort of an atonement. He was only a boy—and some women know what it is to be loved by a boy.

She compared the pleading of the others with Elliott's business-like offer, and wondered at the severity of fate. Then she wrote a note: "Miss Marshall accepts with pleasure, Mr. Elliott's kind invitation to become his wife," and sent it by a messenger. Before burning her relics, as an engaged girl should, she sat down to look them over once more. With a Spartan-like resolve she at last put every letter and keepsake into the sacrificial flames. When it was over she sighed, for she had nothing left but memory and the business like promise of the morning: "I 'll be a good husband to you, Belle, if you 'll only give me a chance."

Her note would doubtless be answered

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in person, and she donned a pretty white gown, that she might not keep him waiting. She vainly tried to tone down her flushed cheeks with powder. "You are a nice sort of girl," she said to herself, "for a reasonable marriage."

Just then the door-bell rang, and she flew to answer the summons. There was no one else in the house, the coast was clear and she was an engaged girl. She started in surprise, as Elliott walked solemnly on by her, after she had closed the door.

"Nice afternoon," he said.

There was no doubt about it; Miss Marshall had expected to be kissed. Still unable to speak, she followed him into the parlour. He turned to offer her a chair and instantly read her thought. "You need fear nothing of the kind from me," he said in a blundering way, which men consider a high power of tact. "It 's not hygienic, and is a known cause of disease. Above all things, let us be sensible."

"You got my note?" she enquired faintly.

"Yes, and I came to thank you for the honour conferred upon me. I assure you,

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I fully appreciate it—more, perhaps, than I can make you understand."

Throughout his call he was dignified and friendly, but she was in a state of nervous excitement which bordered on hysteria.

"You are nervous and overwrought," he said in a friendly way. "Perhaps I would better go. I 'll come again soon, and you shall name the day, and we will make plans for our future."

He shook hands in parting, and Belle ran up-stairs as if her life depended upon it. Once in her own room, she locked the door, then threw herself down among her sofa pillows in a passion of tears.

"A—cause—of—*disease*—of—*disease*," she sobbed. "Oh, the—brute!"

She had kept her lips for her husband, and the wound went deep. When she descended the stairs, calm and collected, her eyes were set and resolute, and there was a look around her mouth that boded ill for Mr. Thomas Elliott, of Harvard, '94.

The next day he asked her to drive.

"I don't want to hurry you in the least," he said, "and the time is left to you. Only tell me a little time before, that is all. And Belle, remember this: I am

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going to be perfectly and absolutely truthful with you, and I expect you to be the same with me."

It was not long before she found out that he meant what he said.

"Do I look nice?" she asked him one evening, when they were starting for the theatre.

"I am sorry to say that you do not," answered Elliott. "You 've got too much powder on your nose, and that hat is a perfect fright."

Her eyes flashed, but she said nothing. Offering him her handkerchief she commanded him to "wipe off the powder," and Elliott did so, wondering in a half-frightened way, what the mischief was the matter with Belle.

They were early, and sauntered along the brilliantly lighted street, with plenty of time to look into the shop windows. One firm had filled its largest window with ties of a dashing red.

"I think I 'll get one of those," Tom said. "They 're stylish just now, and I think it would be becoming, don't you?"

"No, I don't," she answered promptly. "Only a man with a good complexion can wear one of those things!"

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Tom had always thought his dark clear skin was one of his best points, and that Belle should insinuate that it was n't, hurt his pride. Neither spoke until they entered the theatre; then man-like he said the worst thing possible.

"That 's a pretty girl over there," inclining his head toward a blond beauty. "I always liked blonds, did n't you?"

Belle was equal to the occasion. "Yes, I always liked blond men; I don't care so much for the girls."

Elliott's lower jaw dropped thoughtfully. He was as dark as Egypt, himself.

Neither enjoyed the play.

"Seeing it a second time has spoiled it for me," Tom said. "I took Miss Davis last week and we both enjoyed it very much."

Belle's stony silence at last penetrated Tom's understanding.

"There 's no reason why I should n't take another girl to the theatre," he explained, "just because I happen to be engaged to you. It is n't announced yet, and won't be until you are willing. And you know it does n't change my regard for you in the least to go with any one else. You are welcome to the same freedom."

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A great light broke in upon Belle. The next time he called she had gone to play tennis with a Yale man. He saw them laughing and chatting a little way down the street, and the owner of the blue sweater was carrying her racket. Tom was angry, for the Yale man was an insufferable cad, and she had no business to go with him. He would speak to her about it.

On the way home, he wisely decided to say nothing about it. Perhaps Belle was n't as fully accustomed to being guided by reason as he was, though she was an unusually sensible girl. He must be gentle with her at first; she would grow by degrees.

Acting on this impulse, he took nis cherished copy of Spencer's *Ethics* and presented it to her.

"You 'll like this," he said, "after you have got into it, and it will help you amazingly about reasoning."

A well-developed white arm threw the Spencer vigorously against the side of the house. Elliott was surprised, for a woman like this was utterly outside the pale of his experience. Perhaps she did n't feel well. He put his arm around her.

"What is it, Belle?" he asked anxiously.

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The singular phenomena increased in intensity, for Belle jerked away from him, with her eyes blazing.

"How dare you touch me?" she said, and walked like an empress out of the room.

Inside of ten minutes the idea came to Elliott that she did not intend to return until he left the house. Her handkerchief lay on the table, and he picked it up. He looked carefully into the hall, and saw no one. Then the apostle of reason put the handkerchief into his pocket and walked out of the room to the front door, then slowly down the street, still in a brown study. "What could a young woman mean by such vigorous hints of displeasure?" Four years at college had taught him nothing of women and their peculiar ways, and he was evidently on the wrong track. It was n't reasonable to humour her in such tantrums, but he sent a box of roses by way of a peace offering, and received in return a note which emboldened him to call.

An old-time friendly chat put them on an equal footing again, and Elliott grew confidential.

"Every thought of mine rightfully belongs to you, I suppose," he said one day.

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He saw them laughing and chatting a little way down the street, and the owner of the blue sweater was carrying her racket.

From the Drawing by Dalton Stevens.

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"Every thought of mine *is* of you," she replied softly, and he watched the colour in her cheeks with a sensation akin to pleasure.

He thought about it in the night afterward. It was nice for a fellow to know that a girl like Belle thought of him often. If it had been a proper thing to do, he would n't have minded kissing her when she said it, for he had never seen her look so pretty.

The Yale man had gone back to college and Elliott settled down in business with his father. He and Belle were the best of friends, and he looked forward with increasing pleasure to the day which she had not yet named. He planned a European tour which he was sure would both surprise and please her. He did not intend to mention it until after the ceremony.

Surely no lover ever had a more reasonable and attractive path to travel. Belle was everything that could be desired. When his visits were infrequent, she did not seem to miss him, and—rarest quality in woman!—never asked him any questions as to the way in which he had spent the time away from her.

Tom felt like a pioneer who had eman-

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cipated his sex by applying the test of reason to every duty and pleasure in life.

The summer waned, and beside the open fire in the long cool evenings she seemed doubly attractive. In a friendly way, he took her hand in his, as they sat in front of the flaming brushwood, then started in surprise.

"What is it?" she asked.

"The queerest thing," Tom answered. "When I touched your hand just now, I felt a funny little quiver run up that arm to my elbow. Did you ever feel a thing like that?"

Belle forsook the path of absolute truth.

"No, how queer!"

"Is n't it?" He took her hand again, but the touch brought no answering thrill. "Must have been my imagination, or a chill," commented Tom.

Alone in her room, Miss Marshall laughed softly to herself.

"Imagination, or a chill! What a dear funny stupid thing a man is!"

Sunday evenings Tom invariably spent with Belle. When he called on the first evening of the following week, he was astonished to find that she had gone to church with the Yale man. Mrs. Marshall

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explained to him that it was the young man's farewell visit; his mother had been ill and he had been unexpectedly called home, thus giving him a few days with old friends.

"Must be very ill," said Tom ironically, under his breath, as he went back to his cheerless room.

There was a queer tightness somewhere in his chest which he had never felt before and it seemed to be connected in some way with the Yale man. He slept fitfully and dreamed of Belle in a little house, with an open fire in the parlour, where he would be a welcome guest and the alumni of the other colleges would be denied admittance. He was tempted to remonstrate with her, but had no reasonable ground for doing so. They would be married shortly and then the matter would end.

The next time he went to see her, the peculiar tightness appeared in his chest again, and he could hardly answer her cheerful greetings. He noted that she had acquired a Yale pin, which flaunted its ugly blue upon her breast. He trembled violently as he sat down and drops of perspiration stood out on his brow. She was alarmed and brought him a glass of

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water. As she stood over him, the womanly concern in her face touched him not a little, and he threw his arms around her and drew her down to him,

"Kiss me once, Belle," he pleaded hoarsely.

With a violent effort she freed herself.

"It 's not hygienic," she explained," and frequently causes disease."

Tom stared at her in open-mouthed wonder, and soon after took his departure.

Once inside his room, he sat down to close analysis of himself. He had been working too hard, and was temporarily unbalanced. She was quite right in saying that it caused disease; such a thing must not happen. His reason had been impaired by long hours in the office; otherwise he would never have thought of doing such a foolish, unreasonable thing.

In the morning he received a note from her. She had been summoned to the bedside of a sick sister, and would be away from home as long as she was needed.

The next month was a long one for Tom. He was surprised to find how much of his life could be filled by a woman. After they were married there would be no such separations. He wrote regularly and

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received in return such brief notes as her duties permitted her to write. Then, for a week, none came, and he went to her home to see what news had been received there. The servant admitted him, half smiling, and in white house gown, by the open fire he saw Belle. She had never seemed so sweet and womanly, and with a cry he could not repress, he caught her in his arms. She struggled, but in vain, and at last gave her lips willingly to his. In that minute Tom learned more than all his college course had taught him. Utterly unconscious of his own temerity, he kissed her again and again. The little white figure was silent in his arms, and bending low he whispered a word which no reasonable man would ever be caught using.

Her face shining with tears, Belle looked up.

"Tom," she said, "do you love me?"

"Love you!" he said slowly. "Why—I guess—I must."

She laughed happily and he drew her closer.

"Dear little girl," he said tenderly, "do you love me?"

The answer came muffled from his shoulder: "All the time, Tom!"

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"All the time! You darling! What an infernal brute I have been!"

He evidently intended to kiss her again, for he tried to lift her chin from his shoulder. Providence has taught women a great deal about such things. Her eyes flashed with mischief as she struggled to release herself.

"You must let me go, Tom; this is n't reasonable at all!"

But his training with the Harvard crew had given him a strength which kept her there.

"Reasonable!" he repeated. "Reasonable be hanged!"

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Elmiry Ann's Valentine

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Elmiry Ann's Valentine

"SI," said Mrs. Safford, "did n't Elmiry Ann Rogers come in here to-day to buy a valentine?"

"Yep," replied the postmaster, without interest. "One of them twenty-five cent ones, with lace onto it."

"I thought so," grunted the wife of his bosom.

"How, now, Aureely? Why ain't she a right to buy a valentine if she wants one?"

"She 's a fine one to be buyin' sech trash, when everybody in The Corners knows she ain't hardly got enough to keep soul and body together, let alone clothes and valentines. I knowed she 'd done it, jest as well as if I 'd see her do it, 'cause she aint' missed comin' in on the twelfth of February sence we come here, and that is nigh onto fourteen year."

"Well," said Silas, after a long silence, "what of it?"

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"Si Safford! do you mean to tell me you 've been postmaster for fourteen year an' ain't never noticed that Elmiry Ann Rogers *gets* a valentine every year?"

"No," replied Silas, turning to meet a customer, "I ain't never noticed it."

"Men do be the beatenest," exclaimed Aurelia under her breath.

"Evenin', Mr. Weeks."

"Evenin' Mis' Safford."

"Moderatin' any?"

"Nope, looks like snow, but I reckon it 's too cold."

For perhaps ten minutes the two men talked the dull aimless commonplaces of the country store. The single lamp with a reflector behind it, made all three faces unlovely and old. John Weeks was a tall strapping fellow, slightly stooped, and about fifty years old. His hair was grey at the temples, but his eyes had a kindly twinkle that bid defiance to time.

He bought some brown sugar and went out. One could not blame him for seeking other surroundings, for even at its best, the post-office and general store at The Corners was a gloomy place.

Two well-worn steps that creaked noisily were the links between it and the

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street. The door opened by an old-fashioned latch, worn with much handling, and inside, a motley smell greeted the inquiring nostril unwonted to the place.

The curious sickish odour was a compound of many ingredients blended into one by the all-powerful and all-pervading kerosene. The floor, moderately clean, was covered with sand and saw-dust, which was occasionally swept out and replaced by a fresh layer.

On the right, as you went in, was a small show-case filled with bright coloured candies, displayed in the original packages. Other boxes were piled in the window and still others on the shelf. Within a radius of twenty steps one could buy calico, muslin, ruled stationery, or groceries and kerosene, as he might choose.

Once a year, the commonplace merchandise gave way to "Christmas novelties," and during the first two weeks in February the candy show-case was filled with the pretty nonsensical bits of paper called valentines, with a pile of "comics" on top.

Every year on the twelfth of February, as Mrs. Safford had said, Elmiry Ann Rogers came in and bought a valentine.

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Elmiry Ann's Valentine

Every year on the fourteenth of February, as the postmaster's keen-eyed wife had noted, Elmiry Ann Rogers had received a valentine. It was no comic, either, such as one might send to an unprepossessing old maid of forty, but a gorgeous affair of lace paper and cupids, in an ornate wrapping, for more than once, Elmiry's trembling fingers had torn the envelop a bit, as if she could not wait until she reached home.

In many a country town, the buyer of the valentines would have been known as "Ol' Mis' Rogers," but The Corners, lazy, rather than tactful, still clung to the name the pretty girl had gone by.

There was little in Elmiry to recall the graceful figure that was wont to appear in pink muslin or red merino at church and prayer meeting, for the soft curves had become angles, the erect shoulders were bent, and the laughing eyes were now filled with a dumb pathetic sadness. Elmiry's hair had once fallen in soft curls about her face, but now it was twisted into a hard little knot at the back of her head. The white dimpled hands were dark and scrawny now, but people still spoke of her as "Elmiry Ann."

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The morning of the thirteenth dawned cloudy and cold. The postmaster went out of town on business, and his wife had her hands full. She moved briskly from one part of the store to the other, making change, rectifying mistakes, and attending to the mail.

At noon a crowd of children came in after "comics" and John Weeks stood by, watching aimlessly.

"You want any valentines, Mr. Weeks?" asked Mrs. Safford.

"Reckon not, I 've been growed up too long for that."

"Sho, now! You ain't much older 'n Elmiry Ann Rogers, an' she buys one every year. It 's a nice one too—twenty-five cents."

"I ain't never sent but one," said Mr. Weeks, after a silence.

"That so? Well, some folks buys 'em right along. Elmiry Ann Rogers gets one every year jest as regler as a tea party."

"Who 'd you advise me to send one to?"

"Don't make no difference to us, so we sells 'em," laughed Mrs. Safford. "Stock 's runnin' down now, but if there 's any lef they can be kep' over. We 've had one now for goin' on five year. It 's a fifty

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cent one, an it 's pretty too. Elmiry 's looked at it every year but I guess it 's too expensive."

"Lemme see it."

It was the same size as the others but it had more lace paper on it and more cupids. Weeks was evidently pleased with it and paid the fifty cents without a murmur.

"Makes me feel sorter silly to be buyin' one o' them things," he said awkwardly, "but I 'm allers glad to do a favour for a friend an' I 'll take it off your hands."

"Much obliged," returned Mrs. Safford. "Who you lowin' to send it to?"

Weeks considered carefully. "I 've got a little nephew over to Taylorville," he said, " and I reckon he 'd be right pleased with it." Another avalanche of children descended upon the valentine counter and in the confusion he escaped.

Busy as she was, Mrs. Safford found time to meditate upon Elmiry and her romance. "They do say that John Weeks used to set up some with Elmiry," she thought, "and then it was broke off, but there ain't either of 'em married. I sh'd think he 'd want a woman to do for him, and poor Elmiry—her little house is most

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eat up by the mortgage. The squire was a-sayin' the other day that he thought she 'd soon be on the town 'cause she ain't paid the intrust lately. An her a-buyin' valentines! La sakes! Well, it takes all kinds of people to make up a world!"

Early in the afternoon she sorted the mail, as usual, but there was nothing for Elmiry. A strange fact of the case was that the valentine had always come from The Corners. Mrs. Safford began to hope Elmiry would not be disappointed, then the latch clicked, and she came in.

"I want half a pound of dried beef, Mis' Safford," Elmiry said, "an' a quarter of a pound of rice, an' a jug of merlasses, an' a spool of black thread, number sixty."

"Would you mind writin' down your order, Mis' Rogers? I 'll send Si over with it when he comes, 'cause I 've got to get this mail off in a few minutes an' I ain't got time."

Elmiry seemed disappointed, but wrote her needs on a piece of wrapping paper, using the short blunt pencil which was suspended by a piece of twine from the show-case. Her writing was cramped, old-fashioned, and as distinctive as it was odd.

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When Mrs. Safford had time to look at the order, she became greatly excited. "If that ain't the beatenest?" she said to herself. "Who 'd have thought it? 'Course, maybe it ain't, but I 'm goin' to make sure!"

Late in the afternoon Elmiry came in again, and as before, she was the only customer. "I jest thought I 'd take my things, Mis' Safford," she said by way of explanation, "'cause I want to use some merlasses right away and 't ain't no need to trouble Mr. Safford, if you 've got time to do 'em up."

"I 've got 'em all ready, Elmiry." So Miss Rogers arranged the bundles under her shawl and Mrs. Safford caught sight of something white, held tightly in the dark scrawny hand.

"'T want thread, nor rice," she thought, as Elmiry went out, "and I know 't want her handkerchief. I reckon 't was her valentine she was lowin' to send away, and did n't, 'cause she thought I 'd look. She ain't goin' to fool me though."

Dusk brought the storm which had threatened for two days, and a bitter north wind came with it. In an hour the world was white, and belated foot-

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falls were muffled by the snow. At nine the store closed, and at half-past nine, Elmiry Ann Rogers wrapped her threadbare shawl around her and started down the street to the post-office.

It was a difficult journey, for the snow was three inches deep and was still coming down, but Elmiry knew the way so well that she could have gone with her eyes shut, if necessary.

She was stiff with the cold when she got there, and was fumbling with the opening in the door marked "mail" when a deep masculine voice at her elbow startled her into an impulsive little scream.

"Why, Miss Rogers," it said, "what are you doin' here this time o' night?"

"My goodness, Mr. Weeks, how you scairt me!" she answered trembling.

"You should n't be out a night like this," he continued, "it ain't fittin'."

"I—I jest come out to mail a letter,—an important letter," said Elmiry weakly.

"Why that 's funny—so did I! Strange that we should meet, ain't it? And now, Miss Rogers, I 'm goin' to take you home."

"Oh, you must n't, Mr. Weeks," cried Elmiry in a panic, "I 'd feel wicked to take

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you out of your way a night like this, and 't'aint but a few steps anyway."

"Sakes alive! Elmiry, how you talk! I 'm a-goin' to take you home and we might as well start. Come."

He slipped her arm through his and turned down the street.

Elmiry felt a burning blush on her cold cheeks, for it had been years, more than she cared to remember, since any one had taken her home.

As they went on, Mr. Weeks did the talking and Elmiry endeavoured to collect her scattered senses. There was something strangely sweet in the feeling that she had a protector, and she wondered dimly how she had ever had the courage to take the trip alone. When they reached her door, she turned to bid him good-night, but he seemed to take no notice of it.

"I guess I 'll go in an' set a spell," he remarked. "I 'm quite chill." Elmiry had closed the door of the kitchen and turned up the light which was burning dimly before she remembered she had no fire. Mr. Weeks opened the stove door and found the interior dark and cold. Then he looked behind the stove, but

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there was neither wood nor coal and the floor was spotlessly clean.

"Why, Elmiry," he said, "I 'll go right out and get you an armful of wood. It 's been stormin' so you 've got out. I 'll bring in a lot of it."

"No, no," she cried. "Please don't! It 's too late for a fire to-night and in the mornin' it 'll be clear! Don't go!"

In her tone there was something more than polite anxiety to save him the effort, and he changed the subject. They talked commonplaces until he felt the cold in spite of his warm clothing. She still wore her shawl and looked pitifully thin and weak.

"Ain't you cold?" He asked.

"No," replied Elmiry with great dignity. "I 'm warm-blooded an' most people keep their houses too hot. It ain't healthy."

Mr. Weeks agreed and rose to go. She did not ask him to come again, and he was half-way down the street when he began to wonder about the fire. The light was out, so he went back, very slowly approached the wood-shed by a roundabout way, entered stealthily and struck a match, shading the light with his hand.

On the floor, in the corner, was a very

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small pile of kindlings and the coal-bin was swept clean, no other fuel being in sight.

"It 's jest as I thought," he said to himself. "The poor little soul!"

St. Valentine's morning was clear and bright, but enough snow had fallen during the night to obliterate the telltale tracks around the wood-shed. Mrs. Safford was up betimes, eagerly anticipating her husband's peep into the soap box which held chance letters posted after the store had closed. There were two valentines there, both addressed to "Miss Elmiry Ann Rogers, The Corners."

"Sakes alive!" said Mrs. Safford. "Si! Elmiry Ann Rogers has been a-sending herself valentines every year, regler. I wish 't I knew who t' other was from—this is the first time she 's had two."

"How 'd you know anything about it?"

"Why one on 'em is in the same hand that was on the order she wrote, but t' other looks like a man's hand."

"Aureely," said the postmaster, "you keep still about valentines and everything else you see in the mail, or I 'll lose the post-office, and you 'll go to jail! The

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United States government don't stand no foolin'!"

Awed by her husband's stern manner, Mrs. Safford decided to keep still, but she watched Elmiry Ann closely when Silas gave her the valentines. The thin sad face lighted up with pleased surprise, but Elmiry did not stop. She clutched her treasures tightly and hurried out looking younger than she had for years.

When John Weeks came in during the afternoon the Saffords were putting away the valentines. "This fool business is over for another year, John," said the postmaster. "We 've sold one we 've had for more 'n five years. What you steppin' on my feet for, Aureely? Ain't you got room enough in the store to walk?"

"'Scuse me Si, there 's the squire comin' in."

"Mornin', Squire."

"Mornin', Si. Has your clocks stopped, so 's you don't know it 's afternoon? How 's biz?"

"Oh, so so. What 's new?"

"Nothin', only the selectmen held a meetin' yesterday an' Elmiry Rogers is a-goin' to the poorhouse. She 's back in her intrust, and ain't got no prospects,

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and the Doctor has got to foreclose. They wanted I s'd tell her, but someways, I don't like the idea. She 'll be kep' warm and she 'll be better off, and she 'll have plenty of comp'ny, but I knowed her when she went to school, an' I knowed her mother too. For the sake of auld lang syne I don't want to hurt her."

"Sho now, ain't that too bad?" said both the Saffords together.

Nobody knew just when Mr. Weeks left the store, and Elmiry Ann was startled when she opened the door in response to his vigorous rap. She had not been at home long, and the colour still burned in her cheeks. The valentines lay on the table, presenting a strange contrast to their bleak and commonplace surroundings.

"Why, how do you do?" she exclaimed with a queer little note in her voice. "Will you come in?"

"Yes, I 'll come in," he said decisively. He shut the door with a bang and took the trembling frightened woman into his arms.

"Elmiry! You poor little soul! I 've wanted you 'most twenty years, an' I ain't

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never had courage to say it 'til now. We 've waited too long, an' I want you to come and be my valentine—will you, dear?"

"Why, Mr. Weeks," she cried in astonishment, "what 's took you all of a sudden?"

"It 's sense, I reckon, Elmiry, an' it 's been a long time comin'. I was huffed 'cause you never made no answer to the valentine I sent you, an' I thought you did n't want me, so I just stayed away."

"What valentine?" Elmiry's eyes were very big and fearful.

"Don't you remember that valentine I sent you?—Let 's see, it 's so long ago—I 've most forgot what it was. It said:

"'The rose is red, the violet blue,
Pinks are sweet and so are you;
Give me your heart, you have mine—
Will you be my valentine?'"

"Yes," said Elmiry slowly, "I remember." She went to the Family Bible which lay on the marble-topped table in the front room and took it out. It was worn and faded and there were spots on it which looked like tears. "Did you

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mean that," she asked with difficulty, "for a—a——"

"Yes, I did," answered John, "an' I thought it was cunnin', but I see now, what a blamed fool I was. I should have come and asked you like a man an' not trusted to your understandin' no fool valentine. I made a great mistake—Elmiry, dear, won't you never forgive me?"

The poor little old maid smiled through her blinding tears.

"Oh, John," she said, "I 've waited so long!" Then she broke down and sobbed helplessly in his arms.

Elmiry forgot the empty years, and the pathetic valentines, so dearly bought—it was so sweet to be loved and taken care of by a masterful man.

Neither heard the jingle of sleigh-bells 'till a voice shouted:

"Whoa," outside, and Doctor Jones started towards the gate.

"Who 's that?" said Elmiry.

"It 's the Doctor—he wants to see me about something and I 'll go right out."

"No, I' m sure it 's me, he wants to see, John," said Elmiry sadly.

"'T ain't neither. He see me a-comin' here."

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Without stopping to put on his overcoat Weeks rushed out slamming the door behind him, as he went. The conversation was brief, but to the point, and presently the Doctor drove off with a smile on his face.

"Did n't he want to see me, John?" asked Elmiry tearfully.

"No, it was me, as I told you, but he sent in his congratulations."

"His congratulations! Oh, John! What did you tell him?"

"I told him," said John, taking her into his arms, "that we was engaged an' that you was goin' to be my valentine."

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The Knighthood of Tony

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The Knighthood of Tony

IT was such a pretty bicycle! Tony fondled the glittering spokes and examined the pedals with the air of a connoisseur. He forgot the hump on his back, and his solitary little house on the outskirts of the village in the joy of his new possession.

Only the night before Mrs. Carroll had sent for him and given it to him. "Arthur wanted you to have it;" she said with a tremor in her voice. Between Tony and the delicate child for whom the wheel was bought, there had been a strong bond of sympathy. Tony was always ready to talk to him, or to take him to the woods, and Arthur was the only human being Tony knew, aside from Mrs. Carroll, who did not jeer at the hump on his back, or shrink from him as though he were an evil thing.

When Arthur died, Tony felt a terrible sense of loss, although he was a man

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in years and his friend was but a child.

On account of his deformity, the wheel was none too small. If he could only ride it! He shivered as he thought of the shout of derision which would inevitably be his share, should he venture to ride it through the village streets. But there was the long smooth stretch of road which led to the next town, and there were innumerable paths through the woods that he knew and loved. The people in the village need never know that he had it. He could ride out there and no one be the wiser.

He pushed it into his bedroom and shut the door. He had one other treasure—an old flute; and in spite of the cruel hump it was a very happy Tony who went to sleep that night, with one hand stretched out upon the saddle of the beautiful new wheel.

His father had been a shoemaker and by lifelong toil had left a little competence to his son. Tony knew the trade also and sometimes worked at it. All that he was thus enabled to make by his own efforts, he invested in books at the store in the next town. He felt dimly that it

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would not be right to use his father's money in this way, but his own was a different matter.

There was a tiny paint-box too, with which he sometimes copied the pictures in the books. On the white wall of his bedroom was a poor copy of a Madonna, whose beauty he felt, but could not express. In some way, the Madonna took the place of the mother he had never known, and whose picture, even, he had never seen.

Man though he was in years, Tony had dreams of a soft hand brushing back his hair, and sweet cool lips pressed against his own. When he came back from his weekly trips to the village store, stung to the quick by the taunts and derisions of his fellow-men, he had sobbed himself to sleep many a time longing for that gracious hollow in a woman's shoulder, which seemed made for such as he.

With the first streaks of dawn, Tony started for the woods with his bicycle. There was a wide shady path, well hidden by trees, and here, he made his first attempts. It seemed a long, long time before he could ride even a little way, and the hard falls bruised, but did not

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discourage him. Day after day, in the early light, he led his silent steed to the secret place and returned after nightfall that none might see him.

The trees at the side of the path were more of a help than a hindrance. Often he had restored his balance by reaching out to a friendly trunk. The feeling of confidence which every bicyclist remembers, came at last, and he rode up and down the path, making the turns at the end with perfect ease, until he dropped off from sheer weariness.

The next day he took his flute and his wheel and a bit of lunch into the woods. He rode on the path until he was a bit tired, and then sat down on the grass and began to play. He knew no music but what the birds had taught him, and the simple little melodies he had heard his father hum.

Call after call of the mocking-bird and robin he imitated on his flute, until the little creatures flocked around him as if he had been one of them.

Tony found the purest pleasure in the society of his feathered friends. They never noticed his crooked body, but with that unfailing sight which seems to belong

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to birds and animals, recognised the soul within, and knew that they need have no fear of him.

At that very minute, a robin was perched upon the handle-bar of his wheel, his bright eyes fixed upon Tony, who was calling to him with his own voice in such a wonderful way that the red-breasted visitor was well-nigh dumb with astonishment.

With a sudden cry of alarm, Sir Robin fluttered into a tree above and Tony looked up to behold a strange and altogether lovely thing.

It was only a pretty girl in a well-made bicycle suit of blue corduroy, with her wheel beside her, but to Tony she was even more beautiful than the Madonna.

"Excuse me," she said; "but I simply could n't help stopping to listen."

Tony blushed uncomfortably but he made no reply.

"It must be a great pleasure to be able to call the birds to you like that," she went on; "I really envy you the gift."

He was transfixed with delight. This beautiful straight human being actually envied him the tiny bit of music he could make with his flute! His primitive hospitality came to the rescue.

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"Won't you sit down?" he said timidly.

She was very willing to sit down, and almost before he knew it, he found himself telling her about his little cabin, the father who brought him up, and how Mrs. Carroll had given him the bicycle because he had been good to her little boy before he died.

She admired the wheel very much and talked over its good points with Tony until he felt perfectly at ease. She asked him his name and gave him her own. She was Miss Atherton, staying in a house just outside the village with her invalid brother.

The doctor thought the air of the woods would be good for him, so she had "packed up, bag and baggage," as she expressed it, and brought her horse, bicycle, piano and a trained nurse to the village for the summer.

She wanted Tony to come and see them the very next morning and bring his flute. Her brother would enjoy the music and he could come up on his wheel and stay all day.

She waved her hand to him as she rode away through the woods towards her home.

It was the first time Tony had ever been

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asked to visit any one except the little boy who had died. He remembered every detail of her face and dress, the velvety softness of the corduroy, the tiny watch at her belt, and the brown eyes, so much like those of the Madonna, that he felt as if he had known her always. But one thing troubled him. She did not seem to see the curve between his shoulders. Perhaps it was because he was leaning against a tree all the time she was there. If she had seen it, she would certainly have spoken of it. She might not make fun of him, but she would surely have pitied him, which was almost as bad. Even Mrs. Carroll who was always kind, did that. No, Miss Atherton had not seen it, and his dread of her discovering it was the one flaw in his present anticipations.

She, herself, in a pretty white gown, welcomed him at the door. Mr. Atherton lay in an invalid chair with a table at his side, and shook hands graciously with Tony.

It was such a happy day! He learned the first moves in chess and Miss Atherton played a tender, running accompaniment on the piano to the bird music he made with his flute.

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They all had luncheon on the wide veranda and Tony had not dreamed such dainty things were possible.

They talked of their travels in Europe and Egypt, before Mr. Atherton was taken ill, and showed him pictures of wonderful things in the lands across the sea. She read aloud and sang softly to the half-hushed chords her brother picked out on the guitar, and Tony in a perfect wilderness of enjoyment, forgot all about his crooked shoulders.

That day was the first in a long series of happy ones. He learned to play chess well enough to make himself a formidable antagonist, and after Miss Atherton taught him the notes on the piano he found them on the flute, and began to play simple melodies from the music. Sometimes they all played together, very softly in the twilight—piano, flute and guitar; until it became time for the invalid to be wheeled into his room. Sometimes even after that, Tony would sit on the veranda while she sang or talked to him. Through the long night he dreamed of her, as many a lover dreams of his sweetheart. Beautiful Miss Atherton! He worshipped her from afar off, as a child looks at a star.

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It was Tony who knew where the violets grew, and who in the dim silence of dawn laid handfuls of them at her door. And it was he who brought her a great sheaf of pond-lilies, dripping and sweet.

"Oh, Tony!" she cried, "where do they grow?"

His face flushed with pleasure. "I 'll take you there if you want to go."

"Indeed I do," she exclaimed, "can we go on our wheels?"

"Yes, that 's the best way, though it 's rough in some places."

"I don't mind that," she answered, "come early in the morning and we 'll stay all day."

That afternoon he went to the village store to buy his week's provisions. Half-a-dozen men who were loafing in front of it asked no better sport than to get him into a corner, so that he could not escape, and fling at him taunts and jeers about his crooked body. It was fun to see the sensitive face flush with anger, or quiver with pain, and it was not until his self-control was entirely gone and he sank in a sobbing heap on the floor, that they let him go.

The night was one of torture to him.

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It was not the mother he had never seen who could comfort him now, but Miss Atherton. His idea of heaven was a place where he might always be within the sound of her voice, within reach of her hand, and where she would look kindly upon him.

He was thankful that the way to her house lay beyond the village and not through it. He would never dare to show himself there on his wheel. And the road to the lilies ran through the woods; none would see to-morrow when he went there with her.

She was already on the veranda in her bicycle suit when he rode up the next morning. She tied a basket of lunch to his wheel and a book to her own.

"You see we are going to stay all day," she said, "and I could n't think of starting without refreshment for body and mind. My brother has an armful of new books which came from the city yesterday, and he did n't even hear me when I said good-bye."

They started, Miss Atherton chatting busily and Tony too happy to speak except in monosyllables. A turn in the road brought them to a branch of the river, white

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with lilies in full bloom. She dismounted with a little cry of delight. "Oh, how white and sweet they are!"

Tony found a boat moored by the side of the stream and they soon had gathered a great sheaf of the golden-hearted censers, rich with fragrance, which they covered with cool ferns in the shade of the trees until they should be ready to take them home. Being collected early in the day they were fresher and sweeter than if they had been allowed to feel the heat of the later morning sun.

The lilies well cared for, they sat down under a tree and she read to him the story of Launcelot. His brave deeds and manly service, his love for Guenevere, and the spirit of romance and knightly courage which seemed to fairly breathe from the pages, held Tony spellbound.

"Miss Atherton," he said wistfully, as she finished, "I 'd like to be one of those fellows."

"You can be," she answered.

"How?" he asked, his eyes wide open in astonishment.

"Any man is a knight," she said, "who does what is given him to do, wisely and well. It 's not the horses and the armour,

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Tony, it 's the man, and you can be as brave and true as Launcelot, if you only will. Never permit yourself to speak, or even think slightingly of a woman, and if you have the opportunity to help one, do it at any cost. That 's the foundation of true knighthood and true manhood, too. See, I give you my colours; be my knight if you will," and she leaned forward smilingly to tie a white fragrant scarf around his arm.

But to her surprise, Tony burst into tears. And then a part of his dream came true, for Miss Atherton put her arm around him and drew him close to her. "Tony, dear, what is it? Tell me!" With his face half buried in the sweet comforting place he had longed for, but had never known, he sobbed out all the bitterness of his heart. He told her of the taunts and jeers which made his crooked life a burden—of all the loneliness before he knew her, and someway too, he told her of his longing for his mother whom he had never seen, and whose place he had tried to fill with the picture of the Madonna.

That day in the woods gave Tony undreamed-of strength. He even offered

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to do Miss Atherton's errands at the store.

They did not know that he was a knight bearing his lady's colours—that he was in her service and would be to the very end of the world, for even death, he thought, could never make any difference in his loyalty to her. He was Launcelot and she was Guenevere—it was his secret, and even she must never know.

Toward the end of the summer he rode up to Miss Atherton's with a great bunch of goldenrod, which only he knew where to find. She came to the door white and worried. "My brother is very ill, Tony," she said, "and I have sent my groom for the doctor, but he has been gone so long that I fear something may have happened to him. Would you go—on your wheel?"

For a moment, as the vision of the village store, on the only street that led to the doctor's house, with its crowd of loafers came before him, Tony hesitated. Would Launcelot hesitate with Guenevere in need? "I 'll go, Miss Atherton," he said quietly.

Terror struck him as he came in sight of the store and saw the men he most feared, sitting in front of it. Mutely

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praying for help, he bent to his pedals. But they had seen him, and rushed out into the street with a shout. It was an easy matter for them to stop his wheel.

"Let me go! Let me go!" he cried, "Miss Atherton's brother is sick, and I 'm going for the doctor!"

"That 's a likely story," said one of them. "Bet a hat you stole this velocipede. She would n't send a hunchy like you anywheres."

"Mebby she might," said the keeper of the store. "That 's the city gal he 's goin' to marry. I seen her in the woods kissin' him!"

White with rage, not for himself, but that the dear name of his Lady should be soiled by their lips, Tony raised his slender arm to strike. "Say what you please to me," he muttered between his clenched teeth, "but if you dare to even *speak* of her, I'll——"

Tony said no more, for one of the men half crazed with liquor, lifted the bicycle suddenly, and with a single blow across the curve between his shoulders, dashed him heavily to the ground. Thoroughly frightened, the crowd dispersed leaving

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Tony in the dusty road, amid the wreck of his wheel.

Meanwhile the doctor had arrived with Miss Atherton's servant. In half an hour the invalid was resting quietly, and as the doctor took his leave, Miss Atherton told him how she had sent Tony after him on his bicycle only a few minutes before he arrived.

"You should n't have done that, " he said. "There 's a rough crowd of men in the town, and they are very likely to harm the little chap if they have half a chance. I 'll look for him as I go home and have him come and tell you that he is safe."

Not a man was in sight when the doctor found Tony, and even the shades of the store windows were closely drawn.

After vainly knocking at the door, he smashed in the window with a strong stick, and entering, found the men who were wont to loaf in front of the store, huddled in a corner of it. With the voice of one accustomed to command, he made them improvise a stretcher under his directions, and three of them helped him carry Tony home.

The doctor shook his head gravely when questioned as to the extent of the

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injury. "Some one must stay with him to-night," he said.

One of the men volunteered, but a look of such helpless terror came into Tony's eyes, that he sent them all away, telling the last one to go for Miss Atherton.

It was from him that she learned the whole story and fairly trembling with indignation, turned upon him.

"There is n't one of you in this whole village worthy to touch even the hand of the boy you have killed to-day. He was a man—you are nothing but brutes. Now go, and never let me see your face again."

The doctor met her at the door of Tony's little house. "You 'd better stay with him," he said in a low tone. "He can't last until morning, and your brother will be perfectly safe with the nurse. I 'll go up to your house and send down anything you may need. My man will come and stay within call."

Miss Atherton gave him a note to the nurse, and then went in to Tony. His eyes brightened at the sight of her, and he tried to speak.

"Hush, dear," she said, "it 's all right. The doctor came just after you left, and

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my brother is in no danger now. I 've come to stay with you."

Her cool hand brushed back the hair from his forehead, and moved by an impulse of womanly pity, she knelt beside him and laid her cheek against his own. He closed his eyes and seemed to sleep.

Her eyes wandered around the little room. A table stood in the corner of it. A cabinet photograph of herself in a pasteboard frame, around which Tony had painted a wreath of pond-lilies, stood in the centre of it beside a cracked cup filled with early autumn flowers. The flute lay straight across the front, like a votive offering, and underneath the photograph was written in his large, unformed hand: "My Guenevere."

At last she understood, and feeling that his little shrine was too holy for even her eyes to see, she turned them away.

Tony stirred, and she slipped her arm under his shoulders.

"Miss Atherton?"

"Yes, dear."

"Did—did—they—tell you—what they said?"

"Yes, dear." Her eyes filled.

"I did n't mind—for myself—but——"

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"Hush, dear; I know."

Feeling herself unworthy in the presence of a true knightly soul, Miss Atherton held him untiringly in her arms. When he cried out with pain, she drew him close to her, and pillowed his head upon her breast. "Am—I—going to—die—Miss Atherton?"

She could hardly whisper the words: "I am afraid so, Tony."

"Will you—stay—until——"

"Yes, dear."

"And—afterward—you won't let—them—touch me?"

"No, Tony, no."

His eyes followed hers as she looked at the little shrine again.

"Do you mind?" he whispered anxiously. "I thought—you would n't know—if I called—you—Guenevere—at home."

"Tony, dear, no queen ever had a braver, truer knight than you have been to me. Even Launcelot was not half so noble in the service of Guenevere, as you have been in mine."

He smiled happily and seemed to sleep again.

Just at dawn, he said weakly: "Miss Atherton?"

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"What is it, Tony?"

"The lilies—are opening—about now,—ar' n't they?"

"I should n't wonder. Is there anything you want?"

"Would—you—you—kiss me—just—once? I used—to dream—you did—and—and——"

With a sob she could not hide, she drew him close. He sighed contentedly as he put his frail arms around her, like a weary child, and with his Guenevere's kisses on his lips and brow, her little Launcelot blossomed into the light of which she had told him.

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Her Volunteer

THE flags fluttered listlessly in the warm spring air, and the little group on Jean Perry's piazza was scarcely more energetic. There was a martial significance in the atmosphere, for the heavy tread of battalions reverberated in the hearts of those who had seen one war, and came forth with sudden force to those who were about to live through it for the first time. Yet, the few who lounged in hammocks spoke in depreciation.

"The regular army is enough," said one; "that 's what those fellows are for. As for me, I 'm not anxious to be shot at. I would rather be excused."

Two or three of the others agreed, but Jack Terrence was watching Jean with grave trouble in his face. At the first sneering comment her eyes had flashed and then filled; now her breast was heaving with excitement, and her sensitive mouth was quivering.

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A passing breeze stirred the scarlet veined folds of the flag above her, and for a moment it seemed to wave in proud defiance. But even as the century of its glorious history came back to her, one of the men looking at it reminiscently, was moved to languid speech.

"Funny thing, that rag up there—I suppose it really means a great deal to some people!"

"Do you honestly think so?" Jean's voice carried a note of fearful scorn. "I am proud to say that I am one of the people to whom it means something—more than your little mind can comprehend. If I could die fighting for it, and have it wrapped round me at the last, it would be glory enough for one small life, but I 'm only a miserable woman, and I have to stay at home. Why ar' n't you in the ranks, fighting like a man? What do you think would become of your country if all the men were like you?" She ended convincingly.

The astonished individual whom she addressed made the earliest exit compatible with his dignity. The girls followed by twos and threes, and at last the time came to which Terrence had looked forward

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for an hour—a solitary moment with Jean.

"Let 's go down to the river," he said, after waiting for her to speak. He took possession of her in the calm, masterful way that rests and soothes a nervous woman, and as his ring on her finger gave him the right to do. He found her hat and put it on her unresisting head without jabbing her with the pins, for which, even in her excitement, she was dimly grateful.

"You 're such a comfort, Jack," she sighed restfully, as they strolled in the afternoon sunshine to the bank of the little noisy stream, that by courtesy was called a river.

"I get tired and fretted, and when you come it 's just like putting on a pair of old shoes after you 've been wearing new ones."

Terrence laughed. He was used to Jean's queer similes, and loved her all the more for her unexpectedness.

"You take things too seriously, dear, but just the same I was very proud of you this afternoon. You scattered the enemy's forces neatly." He laughed again, but this time there was no mirth in his face. "I was glad, too, Jean, because it makes it

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easier to speak of something I 've been thinking about for the last two weeks."

For an instant her heart stood still. She did not need to be told what had made him unlike his sunny self for the past few days. He turned his face away that he might not see the trouble in hers. She began to understand.

After a little he spoke again. "Dear little woman," he said softly, "it all rests with you. It is for you to decide—not me. If you feel that my first duty is to you, you have only to say the word; if you feel that, dearly as I love you, there is something beyond that, you—you need not speak at all."

They were sitting on the bank of the stream now, and the late afternoon light was playing upon its rippling surface, while a glory of crimson and gold touched each rock and tree.

Half-way up the hill beyond, was a tiny two-story house in process of construction. On the crest, where the sun might shine on it longest, the flag seemed beckoning to them both. They felt its meaning.

"Jean," said Jack again, and his lips trembled as they said the little name,

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"is the roof of our home coming between us and our flag?"

"If it did," she answered slowly, "it could only be a house—not a home."

In those few moments she had fought a gallant battle with herself. She was white now, but there was new strength in her voice.

"Brave heart," said Terrence tenderly, "I knew what you would say!"

Then he went on to tell her of the regiment that was forming, and in which he had been offered a position in the line of promotion.

Something of the old fire came into her eyes. "Never mind position or promotion. Put on the private's uniform and fight in the ranks and be glad you 've got the health and the strength and the right to do it. Though," she added, as an afterthought, "I 'd try to be reconciled to it, even if you were a major-general." She smiled slyly.

There was no one to see him put his arm around her in the twilight and draw her close. The soft melody of the little stream, as it hurried noisily away, and the drowsy chirp of the birds came dreamily into the summer stillness. Up on the hill, like a parting benediction, a soft

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sunset glow trembled and shone around the flag.

"My sweetheart," he said, "I want to tell you something for you to remember for all time." A lump came into his throat, but he choked it down and went on. "It sounds like a joke in a comic paper for me to say you 're the only woman I ever loved; but it 's true, and you know it is, and it 's the kind of love that could n't die with the body of either of us, don't you know that, dear?"

A sob from Jean made him draw her closer still. "So I want to tell you now that, whatever happens, that will always be the same—nothing can ever change that. I want you to remember that. I have n't half deserved the love you 've given me, but it 's the sweetest thing God ever let a man dream of, and it 's made me a better man, Jean, and there won't be a moment while I 'm away that I won't see your dear face, because I 'm fighting for you as well as for my dear country—to be the man you want me to be, and to make you proud of your volunteer."

The succeeding days were all confusion and preparation. To Terrence, they were days of drill, recruiting and unaccustomed

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labour; to Jean they were days of heart-ache, mingled with a strange pride that was neither wholly happiness nor wholly pain.

The day came at last when the regiment was ordered forward, and the whole town turned out to give its boys a rousing farewell. The love of fight, mingled with the stern discipline and cool courage of the Anglo-Saxon, was in the face of every man in the regiment.

Jean never forgot the spectacle as they formed in marching ranks. In spite of the pain at her heart, she was unreasonably proud at the sight of Jack in his new uniform—not that of a private, as she had wished him to go, but as first lieutenant, looking very handsome.

The long column swung into line. Quick and short came the word of command. Her eyes were upon her volunteer, and across the crowd of waiting thousands, he saw only her—cheeks crimson with pride, eyes sweet with love, and lips that trembled and tried to be brave in spite of all.

"Forward, march!" It was the summons to the glory and the agony of battle for those who kept time with the music.

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It was the summons to as brave a faith to those who remained behind.

After the first shock was over, Jean became almost happy. Jack wrote letters full of hope and good spirits. Every amusing thing that happened in camp, he stored away to write to Jean. He even had a little note-book in which to jot down, from time to time, things which would interest her. This was a never failing source of pleasure to his mates, and he was enthusiastically "guyed" by every man in the company. Of course he told her this, and, womanlike, Jean was much pleased.

Boxes of home delicacies sent to Jack filled the entire company with a beautiful admiration for "Terrence's girl." Magazines, papers and letters almost flooded the mails.

"Poor Terrence is getting pale," said one of them at mess.

"Separation," suggested the corporal.

"Naw," rejoined the other. "It 's carryin' his mail from the post-office to his tent. That 's what 's wearin' on him."

Like a happy lover, Terrence took the jokes cheerfully. The routine of camp life made some of the men complain

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bitterly, but he said never a word. It was for his country—and Jean.

After two months of waiting, the regiment was ordered to the front and the old confusion began again. The night in camp was a memorable one. Already the star-spangled flag had been planted in new places, and the thirst for conquest, which is perhaps, more Anglo-Saxon than exclusively British, was upon every man in the army.

There is no need to write of the gallant charge at Santiago; no need to speak of the steadfast courage of those who faced three times their number in the narrow pass; no need to say that every lad in Uncle Sam's uniform proved himself to be the stuff of which Republics are built—for the world knows it all. Whatever criticism the strategists of the future, sitting in comfortable chairs, may make, as to tactics and military skill, the valour of the American army has been proved anew.

Up the burning, blazing heights, Lieutenant Terrence rushed with his men, stopping not for strange pitfalls and unknown dangers, facing volley after volley of explosive bullets, heeding not those who

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fell by the way, as long as through the smoke of battle, dimly lit by flash and flame, the flag called—"Follow!"

The orders had been brief: "Take the blockhouse on the height by storm." And the charge began with a cheer. But only twenty-two of the seventy-five men reached the summit, and after a fierce hand-to-hand conflict, dislodged the superior force. The rest lay upon the hillside,—some past help, and all exposed to the fire of an unchivalrous foe.

Lieutenant Terrence was among those reported "missing." The corporal spent the night in the underbrush with a lantern, but to no avail.

"Don't be so cut up, Johnny," said a messmate, "you can't do him no good.

"Maybe he fell off the side," replied the corporal, after a long silence, "and, anyway, it 's his girl I 'm thinking of. I 'm going to find him for her."

Over the wire from headquarters came the list of killed, wounded and missing. Jean grasped the morning paper eagerly and then grew white "Missing! Missing!"

A dull dead weight settled down upon her like a suffocating pall. With sudden meaning, what he had said came back to

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her: "It 's you I 'm fighting for as well as for my country—to be the man you want me to be, and to make you proud of your volunteer."

The strained nerves and tortured heart could bear no more, and she was mercifully unconscious when they found her lying with the paper in her hands.

There were hushed whispers in the house for days to come, and the wires were kept busy with eager questionings. The old family physician was fighting an unequal battle with death for Jean had no desire to live.

After a week, a telegram came for Jean. It was the old doctor who opened it with trembling hands, dreading to give her the message he knew it must contain. After the first eager glance, his face changed mysteriously, and then became transfigured with a radiant smile as he read:

"Wounded, but not seriously. Home on *Olivette*. Terrence."

The little blind god has a healing power quite beyond prosaic belief and in a very short time Jean was able to go out and once more the sound of building came from the hillside. All through the days that followed she listened to it with joy.

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Every ring of metal or shout of command was a distinct pleasure.

It was evening when Terrence reached the town unannounced and unheralded with his right arm in a sling. Those on the piazza merely knew that some one had entered the gate, but a white-robed figure flew down the steps with a cry of gladness that sent the family into the house.

Human hearts did not need to be told that a bronzed and bearded soldier was holding his sweetheart close, and that a woman was sobbing out more happiness than one heart could hold, on the shoulder of her volunteer.

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In Reflected Glory

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In Reflected Glory

WHEELS! Wheels! Wheels! The boulevards were full of them, from the glistening up-to-date mount, back to the antiquated '91 model with its hard tires and widely curved handle-bars.

The sun struck the sheen of nickel and new enamel and sent a thousand little needles of light in all directions. Even the '91 model was beautiful in the light of the spring day, overtaken though it might be by the swiftly moving procession.

Wheels! Every man, woman, and child in the city of Chicago who could beg, borrow, or rent a bicycle, was speeding westward to the flagstaff at the entrance to the Garfield Park Loop. Every spoke and bar had been polished to the limit, and the long asphalt boulevard was a glittering, sparkling avenue of wheels.

Wheels! It was the day of the great road race, under the auspices of the Associated Cycling Clubs. The twenty-five mile

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course had been smoothed and measured, the sky was blue and cloudless, and far away in Wheeling four hundred eager cyclers awaited the bugle call.

John Gardner stood at the door of his news-room and watched with a wistful eye, the few hundred wheelmen who had chosen to ride on the business street that went past his door. The orange and black of the South Shore Club fluttered from many a shining bar, and at the sight of the colours the old man's face grew tender. For it was Jack's club that boasted the orange and black—Jack Gardner of the "Varsity, '98," and his only son. A touch on his arm made him turn his face within.

"Father," said a gentle voice, "why don't we go to the doin's?"

"Land sakes, Mother, who 'd take care of the store?"

"Guess the store ain't goin' to run away, and we ain't been out in years. Let 's go, Father, and see Jack ride!"

It was John Gardner's way to oppose everything at first, and then to generously give in. He liked to feel himself master in his own house, so he hesitated.

But the stronger will was fully settled

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upon going. "I 'm a-goin' Father, even if I have to go alone."

She vanished into the back part of the store and began to brush carefully the state gown, the brown silk, made after the quaint fashion of a bygone day. After a few minutes the old man appeared in the door.

"I reckon we 'll go, Hannah," he said, with the air of one granting a favour, "but it do seem wrong to leave the little store!"

For many a year the little store had been open on all holidays, as well as week-days and evenings, for Jack in school and college had needed money, and a startling amount of it. Old John Gardner never complained. Hampered, and made ashamed all his life by his lack of "book larnin'," he had vowed that his son should have "a bang-up eddication, the best they is a-goin'," if he could get it for him.

To-day Jack was to ride in the road race, and imbued with solemn importance Gardner, senior, robed himself for the occasion. They made a queer picture as they stood on the corner waiting for a car. Hannah's brown silk was wrinkled and shabby, but her thin gray hair arranged in tiny puffs around her forehead, looked,

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as her fond mate said, "right smart." Twenty years ago, when Jack was a little boy in dresses, his father had bought a silk hat to wear to a funeral, and it was this relic of past splendour which now adorned his head.

Once on the car, a new fear presented itself. "Mother," he said, "sposen Jack should see us!"

For an instant her heart stood still. "He won't," she said bravely; "he won't see anything but that new bicycle of his'n and we will come home as soon as it 's over."

"I don't know 's we 'd ought," said the old man doubtfully. "He might not like it."

"Like what?" demanded Hannah sharply.

"Our goin'!"

"Hush, Father," she answered, "you know we don't see Jack very often 'cause he has to live down where his school is. Lemme see—it 's three months now since he 's been home, ain't it?"

"Three months yestidy."

"So what 's goin' to hurt if we see him ride to-day? He 'll never notice us among all them folks."

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Two girls who sat opposite were watching the old couple with very evident amusement. "There 's rural simplicity for you," said one.

"So I see," responded the other. "They appear to be attached to some Jack. Would n't it be funny if it were Jack Gardner?" They laughed in unison and Hannah looked up into their faces. John's eyes followed hers and neither spoke for a moment. They saw nothing but the joy and happiness of girlhood and something blinded them both. Jack was forgotten for the moment in the memory of the little girl who lay in the Silent City beyond the smoke and dust of the town.

They left the car when the others did and followed the crowd.

"I don't b'leeve Jack 'll see us, Mother," said the old man. "I ain't goin' to worry about it no more."

Twenty-five miles away, Jack Gardner surveyed his wheel complacently. Every screw was tightened, his chains were just right, his tires were exactly mellow enough and his handle-bars were at the proper pitch. He was none the less pleased with his own appearance, for he had written his father that he needed a new suit

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in the colours worn by the South Shore Club. He had searched the town for the orange and black and finally found them. The S.S.C. on his black chest could be seen as far as his wheel could, and he had topped the glaring outfit with a flaming orange cap, with a black tassel to stream in the wind behind.

"Get on to the oriole!" The champion of a rival club was inclined to be sportive at Jack's expense. He retorted with a fling at the green costume of the other, and then the bugle sounded for the flying start.

Anxious friends and trainers shouted, final directions from behind the "dead line," as Jack called it. Another blare from the bugle, a sudden whir, a flash of the shining spokes and they were off.

As the last group flew over the tape the train started back to the city. A South Shore Club man climbed up on the locomotive to "josh" the engineer. "You 'll have to get a move on you, if you catch Gardner," he said.

The engineer laughed and looked fondly at his giant of steel. Perhaps an engineer enamoured of his engine can understand the love of a cyclist for his wheel.

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The people around the Garfield Park Loop were beginning to get impatient. Most of them had stood for two hours holding their bicycles, and even a well behaved bicycle is an awkward possession in a crowd. Pedals scraped the shins of utterly strange riders, handle-bars got tangled in watch-guards, and front wheels got into mischief with unpleasant regularity.

Close to the course, and on the grassy bank, sat Mr. and Mrs. Gardner. Kindly souls had made way for them until they had at last reached the very front. The day and the multitude were almost spectacle enough, but a cry from the far north brought them to their feet.

Yes, there they were—a cloud of dust across the field. How small the riders seemed! Nearer and nearer they came—how the shining wheels flew through the sunlight! Tense, strained faces almost on the handle-bars: every man of them was doing his best, and the crowd was cheering like mad. The band played merrily, as on and on they flew,—past the judges' stand, over the tape and down, to the mingled praise and solicitude of their friends. The old people were very much

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disappointed. Jack had not ridden after all! Perhaps—but there was another cloud of dust and another cry from the north. On came another group of riders. They went by like the whirlwind, but no Jack was there.

"I sh'd have thought he 'd got back somewheres near the front," said the old man. He was hurt to think his son was so far behind.

Group after group passed by, the old people watching anxiously; then Hannah gripped his arm suddenly.

See! Down the course, only a faint speck now, shone the orange and black of the South Shore Club. Perhaps——

Yes, riding at the head of thirty tired wheelmen, to the stirring strains of a Sousa march, their Jack, strong, superb, excited, nerving himself for the final effort.

Their hearts stopped beating during the instant he was flying by. "There," she whispered reassuringly, "I told you he would n't see us. My! Was n't he fine?"

But John Gardner could not speak, for his eyes were dim with happy pride in remembrance of that superb specimen of

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perfect manhood six feet high—his Jack, to whom he had given the "eddication."

They watched the rest of the race with little interest, for the best of it all had gone by.

When the last rider crossed the tape, the multitude stirred to go. "We better stand right here, Hannah, till some of these folks gets away," he said. So they stood perfectly still and let the crowd surge around them.

Then a great huzza went up, the track cleared again, as if by magic, and down the course came a dozen men, shouting in unrestrained joy. Aloft on their shoulders they held—the old people craned their necks to see—yes, Jack—their Jack—looking sheepish and very much ashamed.

"Why, Mother," the old man cried, "he 's won! Our Jack 's won the race! Do you hear?"

Mother's eyes were fixed on the black and orange sweater, for Jack was once again in regulation bicycle attire, and her heart was too full to trust itself for speech.

"Three cheers for Gardner! 'Rah for the South Shore Club!" and the great field swelled and swelled again with bursts of applause. And then—the crowd parted

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some way and Jack saw those pathetic faces upturned to him.

It is said that when a man is drowning, in the flash of a second his whole previous life passes in review. Something like this came to him at the crowning moment of his twenty-three years.

At that minute he knew, as never before, how those hands had toiled for him, how those lips had prayed for him, and how those honest hearts had loved him ever since he was born. A sudden lump came into his throat, for he seemingly had withheld the only reward they wanted for it all.

"Let me down, fellows," he cried, "there 's my folks."

Almost before they knew what had happened, he had rushed up to them with hands outstretched. "Why, Father! Mother!" he exclaimed; "why did n't you let me know you wanted to come?"

Just a minute the old people doubted the wisdom of their course, then the gladness in Jack's face set all at rest. The men from the South Shore Club gathered around and were presented, one by one. They shook hands with the old gentleman and told them how proud they were

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of Jack, and doffed their caps to Mrs. Gardner, "just z's if I was a fine lady," she said afterward.

Then Jack said everybody was going down to the club for lunch and his father and mother must come too.

"No, no!" gasped Mrs. Gardner in affright; "no! no!"

"Well, indeed you are coming," said Jack, with a charming air of proprietorship. "I guess when a fellow wins the race of the year that his father and mother will go to lunch with him." Then he squeezed her thin wrinkled hand and whispered tenderly: "Dear little mother! To think you wanted to come, and I did n't know!"

The hero of the day turned to those who were with him: "Will some of you fellows get a carriage? I don't think I want any more bicycle riding to-day and I 'll go down with my father and mother if one of you boys will lead my wheel."

It was an enchanted journey for the old people to roll down the broad smooth boulevard in a real carriage, with Jack sitting in front of them telling them all about the race. The President of the South Shore Club, the son of a man known and honoured throughout Chicago, had

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asked to be presented, and said he hoped Jack's father would be willing to be his guest for the day.

"I told him father would be pleased," concluded Jack, "and he wanted mother too, but I said I guessed not, that I was going to have my little mother for my own guest."

At last, when the carriage stopped before an imposing brown stone house, Jack helped them out, and entered the club with the shabby little brown figure on his arm. "Just wait here a few minutes," he said, "until I make myself presentable."

He stationed them on a luxurious sofa, and ran off to the dressing-rooms.

The old man looked after him fondly. "I did n't think Jack would be ashamed of us, Mother," he said.

"No, Father, and he ain't."

"My, ain't this a grand place?"

Half awed, they gazed at the rich furnishings in silence. "Seems like heaven don't it?" he murmured.

"Makes me think more of the chapter in Solomon," she replied.

"How 's that, Mother?"

The little old lady looked up at him,

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her face shining with ineffable happiness, and repeated softly:

"'*He led me into his banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.*'"

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The House Beautiful

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The House Beautiful

FOUR years at College had given Jack Hardy high ambitions, but two years in society had perceptibly lowered them. Jack had inherited enough money to make him a prize in the matrimonial lottery and he was not slow to see that the reason of it lay in his bank account. With a singular lack of conceit, he did not admit, even to himself, his personal charms.

Walking home one evening from a large reception, his indignation rapidly developed into a moving force, and in a sudden flash of insight he saw two paths which lay straight before him.

One was smooth, leading to gardens of pleasure; the other rough, toilsome, and strewn with failures, but at the end of it was a goal well worth working for. His inheritance was all he needed to enter one; but on the other hand, hard, unfaltering work lay before him and was the only way to success.

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His strong young face was set in lines of unwonted determination. "Farewell to an idle society life," he said aloud, "here 's to hard work, self-respect, and perhaps an honourable name."

There was not a little comment in his set when it became known that Hardy had left town without assigning any reasons, length of stay, or even leaving an address.

He retired to an obscure hamlet on the Jersey coast and secured a room in a rambling old house which faced the sea. Here he could work; he could study hard, or write, and become, perhaps, a strong man intellectually, instead of being a fastidious ornament in a drawing-room where he felt his financial value was the key-note to his popularity.

The white-haired mistress of the mansion, however, had a confession to make which did not agree at all with his inclinations.

"I 've got another boarder," she said, "but she 's a quiet, nice-appearing girl and I guess she won't disturb you any."

"Girl!" Hardy scowled, then recovered himself. "Please, don't take any more

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boarders," he said smilingly, "I 'll make it worth your while."

When he said "please" women instinctively obeyed him. Mrs. Kitson readily promised to abstain from further extension of the hilarious pastime of taking boarders, which she had hitherto found to be necessary to her pocket-book, if not to her inclinations.

He spent the afternoon in getting his traps settled in his new location. The quiet was broken only by the boom of the breakers on the shore below, and the room was guiltless of sofa pillows and photograph frames with which women are wont to burden a helpless bachelor. He felt a certain sense of emancipation.

It was rather awkward having a girl around, and he contemplated the propriety of bribing Mrs. Kitson to invent some excuse for dispensing with her presence. Some country damsel, he reflected, perhaps a seamstress, or a teacher who "boarded round." He determined to treat her with cool politeness while he might be forced to endure her proximity.

Going down to supper he encountered the other boarder in the sitting-room. His hostess, rather uncertain as to the

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proper form of introduction, mumbled something he did not quite understand. He did not wish to appear at all concerned anyway, and bowed distantly.

Miss Wheeler's dark eyes flashed and the colour came into her face. He noted the signs of resentment and wondered what he had done; not that he cared, particularly, only one should always be polite.

The supper was delicious. Everything was well cooked and well served. The china was dainty and the linen spotless.

Under the kindly influence of food which proverbially melts the masculine heart, Hardy began to look occasionally, and with some curiosity at the girl opposite him. She was tall, and well formed, her head well poised, and her voice, when she spoke, was agreeably modulated. She must be the teacher who "boarded round."

She was apparently unconscious of his presence. She drew Mrs. Kitson into volumes of personal reminiscence which prevented any awkward silence, and when they had finished, went with the hostess into the kitchen and helped her wash the dishes.

Hardy stood aloof for a moment, and

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then went up-stairs. He was accustomed to having girls all smiles and attention when he graciously consented to appear. This one, however, could not have been more politely unconcerned if he had been a door-mat!

"She does n't know," he began unconsciously, as the dull red flooded his face. "No, and she never shall!"

With that desire for achievement which pique inspires, he went to work. He had a dim notion of writing a story, such as he used to do for a college paper, but it eventually became a short sketch, half humorous and half cynical in tone.

When it was finished, he went out to send it off. He knew the street number of only one publication—a thing he had bought on the way down to appease the business instincts of the energetic and persistent train boy.

When he returned, he glanced through the window of the sitting-room as he stepped upon the broad, old-fashioned veranda. There was no light except the driftwood fire in the big fireplace, and Miss Wheeler sat in a low chair watching it. It was an earnest womanly face full of purpose and aspiration. The re-

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pressed energy, which he had first noticed in her manner, was gone. She was off her guard, and her eyes were those of a wistful child, softened and made tender by her dreaming.

When he went down to breakfast the next morning, he learned that Miss Wheeler had taken her bicycle and gone off to spend the day. With a little tact, he diverted Mrs. Kitson's conversation to herself. He did not wish to take an unfair advantage, and besides he was not at all interested.

It was a long day, for he did not feel like work, so he tramped through the fields, sat on the sea shore, read a little, envied the consolation other men seemed to find in smoking, and was conscious of a new interest in life, when, just at dusk, Miss Wheeler rode up and dismounted at the gate.

Mrs. Kitson's penetrating voice rang out clearly, and rose to his room. "How fur did you ride?"

Miss Wheeler was bending over her cyclometer, but her reply was inaudible.

"Hey?"

"Twenty-three miles." Her young voice was clear and strong this time.

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At supper he watched her closely for symptoms of weariness, but she was fresh and rosy, and unaffectedly hungry. She still wore her bicycle suit, and talked pleasantly with Mrs. Kitson. She answered Hardy's questions, to be sure, but it was in monosyllables.

"She must have the strength of an Amazon," he mused, as he sat by the fire while she was helping Mrs. Kitson with the dishes, and laughing occasionally in a happy childlike way.

A ten-mile ride would utterly exhaust any girl he knew, and she apparently considered twice that distance merely a pleasant outing!

She came in after a while and sat on the other side of the hearth. Mrs. Kitson with many apologies, had gone "visitin'."

After an awkward silence he laughed outright—the boyish hearty laugh that won him friends everywhere.

"Are you going to keep it all to yourself?" she asked smiling.

"I was thinking," he returned, "of what the Autocrat said when some one asked him to define happiness."

She dimpled prettily.

"Yes, I know. 'Four feet on a fender.'"

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Hers were not so far away but that the contrast in size was evident.

The ice was broken. "And are you happy?" he inquired tentatively.

"Why should n't I be?" she answered. "I 've got a sound body, a clear brain, an honest name and a clean heart. Is n't that enough?" She looked up smiling.

He hesitated, for her point of view was new to him. "Most people would include money in the list, I 've got all the things you say make you happy, and yet——"

"You have n't the money." She had finished his sentence for him.

"You don't look as if it bothered you a great deal," she added shyly.

He was silent. For once he had been separated from his birthright and considered apart from his inheritance. The sensation was distinctly novel. "Do you ever think," she went on, "of the house you would build if you had all the money you wanted?"

"I used to, when I was a very little boy," he answered with an effort.

"I do even now, it 's one of my day-dreams and I call it my House Beautiful," she said.

He asked a timid question and some-

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thing of the expression he had seen on her face in the firelight the evening before, returned to it. Had she been dreaming of her "House Beautiful" then?

The mellow tones of her voice sounded full and soft in his ears. She was telling of a house of grey stone with wide porches and massive columns. She spoke of the reception hall, the stately stairway, and the tiger skin rug in the drawing-room.

A tower room with windows facing both the sunset and the sea, beautiful things in costly woods, and fabrics in white and gold.

He was interested, in spite of himself, and began to help her plan it. There was no difference of opinion, even in the smallest detail, and room by room, and floor by floor, they furnished their imaginary castle. On the very top of the tower, the Stars and Stripes would always flutter —"because it 's the most beautiful flag in the world," with a little choke in her voice, "and it means the most."

Only a week before he had attended that offensive reception, and he was thinking of the contrast now. The men that night had spoken with an affected English

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drawl, and the girls were all "going abroad for the summer."

And to-night he had forgotten his bank and mining stocks, and was sitting by a driftwood fire with a girl who had childish dreams of building a house, and choked when she spoke of the flag.

"And the doors should open forever, and ever, to all who had done anything noble in the world, or had tried to do it."

With a little lingering sigh, she stretched her white hands towards the flames. The House Beautiful was finished, but she was still dreaming.

He repeated her thought mentally: "The doors should be open forever, and ever, to all who had done anything noble in the world, or had *tried* to do it." Would that bar him out? He turned uneasily in his chair.

Mrs. Kitson returned, and he felt that he must say something: "You should have gone to college," he ventured, in a tone which was meant to be both fatherly and cheerful.

She rose smilingly and bade him good night. "I am a graduate of Vassar," she said simply.

A day or two later his heart fluttered

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gladly when the mail brought him a check for his sketch, and a request to submit further manuscript.

He shut himself up in his room for a whole day and tried to work, but a far-away clack-clack grated on his nerves and made him irritable. He went off for a tramp and on his return found Miss Wheeler sitting on the porch.

"Did you hear that constant clatter this afternoon?" he asked.

"Yes, it was my typewriter," she answered demurely. She was evidently a stenographer.

"I 'm sorry," said Hardy awkwardly, "but it disturbs me." Then with more innocent joy than foolish pride, he continued:

"I—ah—write, you know."

Miss Wheeler gathered up her books. "I regret that it annoys you," she said frigidly, "but I cannot help it." Then with an exact imitation of his tone and manner, she added: "I—ah—write, you know." And then she left him alone.

Hardy had business in town of such a pressing nature that he could not even stop to tell Mrs. Kitson that he was going. He sent her a telegram from the station,

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saying he did not know when he would be able to return.

The gay streets of the city, brilliantly lighted, even in the early evening, were full of allurement, as they always are, to one who has been away. But a higher impulse within him was striving with the one that demanded pleasure. He would go back. So he bought some magazines, and sat down to wait for the outgoing train, the very next day.

He cut the leaves mechanically, and dipped here and there into the pages. Then the title of a story caught his attention, and he read it to the finish. It was a simple tale, told with no striving after effect, but the lines were broadly human, and it rang true. The signature was "Constance Wheeler."

The consciousness of his own caddishness came home to him like a blow.

They had a long talk the next day, and he told her what he was trying to do. "But you discourage me," he said. "I never can do it as you do."

They were sitting by the sea, watching the sunset as the rich colours came over from the west, and touched the waves with tints of opal. "I 've been doing it

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three or four years," she said, "and you are just beginning." Then with unknowing comprehension she went on. "Besides, what one accomplishes, does n't matter in the least. It 's the work that makes men and women of us."

The light which was reflected back from the surf made her face tender then, and leaning forward, with a simple reverence which she could not misunderstand, he kissed her hand.

The summer promised to be all too short. They studied and read together and criticised each other's work.

Hardy was fond of rowing, so they spent many hours together on the water. Constance sat on a cushion in the stern and read aloud, while Jack pulled vigorously or let the boat drift idly, as best suited his mood.

One day the book was absorbingly interesting, and one of the oars slipped into the softly-lapping water, and set out for lands unknown. Constance saw it first and her face changed. His eyes followed hers, but he sat quite still for a moment.

They were but a mile from shore and the tide was going in.

"We 'll go in with it," she said bravely.

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With the remaining oar Hardy turned the boat so as to catch the full force of the shoreward impulse, but in a very few minutes they saw the tide would not do as they wished.

A sudden cloud obscured the sun. The wind shifted and grew cold. Quick to act in an emergency, Jack took off his coat and shoes and tied the anchor rope under his arms. In an instant she saw what he was going to do.

"No—no, Jack," she pleaded.

It was the first time she had ever called him Jack. The sky was threatening and the wind was growing stronger.

"Constance, dearest," he said tenderly, "there is no other way."

He sprang into the water and struck out with long powerful strokes for the shore.

As if conscious of its precious burden, the boat followed slowly and steadily, then more slowly, then in fitful jerks. They were half-way to the shore but Jack's strength was failing fast.

The sky grew darker, and there was a sullen roar of thunder. Constance knelt in the stern, took off her dress and shoes, and took down her hair. She slipped into

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the water just as the storm broke, and Jack was gasping when she swam up beside him.

"It 's a cramp," he said weakly.

"I know. Can you slip the rope over your head?" She held him up while he obeyed. The sea was rising and she felt her strength to the full.

The boat drifted away and still holding him up she put the braids of her hair into his hands. As a drowning man will catch at a straw, he clutched it, then sank almost into unconsciousness, but still held with spasmodic grasp to the only hope within his hands.

It was too dark now to see the shore, but Constance struggled on, keeping his head above the water as best she could. She rested from time to time by floating and spending only strength enough to keep them from being carried out to sea, but she was rapidly becoming exhausted.

At last, when she was too weak to swim another stroke, she sank despairingly, and found the firm ground under her feet. It was easy then, and she half dragged him ashore.

When she awoke out of what seemed a horrible dream, she was in her own room, and Mrs. Kitson was bustling about her

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with motherly solicitude. Jack was kneeling beside her, and when she opened her eyes, his were shining with the "light that was never on land or sea," as he took her hand.

An answering glow crept into her face and he stooped, unafraid, to her lips. There was no need of words between them —love went to meet love with open arms.

As soon as she was able to sit up, they made plans for their future. "Just our two pens, Jack," she said happily, "to buy everything we want. But we won't want much else, if we have each other." A lump rose in his throat, but it was not yet time to tell her.

He went to the city every day now, "on business," as he said, and as the summer faded, and the leaves turned crimson and gold, Constance began her wedding gown. She put so many hopes and fancies into it with the tiny careful stitches she took that had the white not been senseless, it must have turned to rose under her hands.

They were married in a little church on a glorious autumn day.

"I think it 's the last day," she said; "the summer only just waited for us."

He would not tell her where the wedding

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journey was to be, and she showed little curiosity.

"I don't care where we go," she said as they left the house for the last time, "only you must n't be extravagant."

It was not until the train stopped at a little town by the sea, and very near the city, that he gave her any hint of his plans. They had taken a carriage and driven down a beautiful winding road. He waved his hand towards a distant hill.

"That is where we are going," he said. "It 's rather a pretty place," indifferently. "I think you 'll like it."

She saw a stately mansion of grey stone, with wide porches and massive tower, and where he knew the reception hall and the stately stairway were just as she would wish her own house to be—even the tiger skin rug in the drawing-room, and the beautiful things in costly woods, and fabrics of white and gold. He could stand it no longer and leaned towards her, thrilling with an unspeakable tenderness.

"Heart of mine," he whispered, "haven't you guessed it?"

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From a Human Standpoint

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From a Human Standpoint

"WILL the madam please walk in to supper?"

Carroll stood in the doorway with a napkin over his arm, the very picture of servile obedience. Katherine sprang from the sofa, saying laughingly, "Indeed the madam will!"

His obsequious manner changed at once, and he put his arm around her waist with a happy sense of proprietorship.

The table was cosily laid for two, linen and china were of the daintiest, and the tiny kettle swung and bubbled merrily over the alcohol lamp.

"How dear and homey it all is!" Katherine exclaimed, as she sat down.

"And how primitive," suggested Robert. "But our respective professions are not worth much if our imaginations can't change our tea into a banquet. Will you have a little of the quail?" He poised

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a mutton chop on his fork and looked inquiringly at Katherine.

"I 'm afraid quail is too rich for me to-night," she answered, "but I will take a little of the toast which is commonly supposed to go with it, and some of the nectar which I shall brew myself."

"Lucky thing you don't like cream with your nectar," he responded, "for the cat got into it this afternoon. I 'm afraid I neglect my housewifely duties for my art."

"That does n't matter, as long as art progresses. Did Mickey behave to-day?"

Mickey was the name Katherine had given to Carroll's model, who was posing for his "Aurora." She had the fair skin and blue eyes with which Ireland compensates her daughters for a somewhat unlovely mouth, and her hair was a flaming auburn glory which he tried in vain to paint. It was a little startling until you knew Mickey. People who could pass hundreds without noting age, colour, or condition of servitude, would stop and gasp as she went by. But those who were privileged to know her intimately became so absorbed in contemplation of her manifold character that mere externals were passed unnoticed.

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"Mickey did pretty well to-day," he said. "She put on your best hat while I was out, and I found her strutting before the mirror when I came back. I declare to you, solemnly, Katherine, that the effect of your violets against that hair was absolutely *fortissimo*. She will wear it to church some day if we don't watch her. But she did n't cut my brushes into scallops, nor assist in the painting when my back was turned. No, on the whole Mickey has been angelic. How did things go with you?"

"About as usual, though I believe more than the usual number of freaky people have been in. They ask for everything from money and advice, up to a letter of introduction to the managing editor. They seem to think that a woman tied down to a newspaper desk, has only to beckon and the universe hastens to do her bidding. You remember I told you about the woman who came in last week with a yearning to do 'lit'ery work'?"

Robert nodded.

"She was in again to-day. She is doing 'lit'ery work' and likes it very much. What do you suppose it is?"

"Give it up."

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"Addressing envelopes! Did you ever?"

"Great idea," said Robert, "I 'll tell Mickey, and perhaps she 'll clean my brushes. Mickey shall be an artist."

Together they washed up the dishes, then Robert hung the dish-towel out of the window to dry, and took off his apron.

In the studio was an open fire, the single extravagance which the Carrolls allowed themselves. Perhaps it was not so extravagant after all, since it saved gas, and Robert picked up most of the wood in his daily walks along the lake shore.

"Let 's sit on the rug," said Katherine, and they curled up like two children before the fire. Robert rested his head upon his elbow, and looked up contentedly into her face. The sweetness of it was half hidden, half revealed, by the dancing firelight, but there were lines around the mouth, and faint marks of worry on the forehead. Yet, it was a patient face—one to teach a man strength and kindliness.

The hand that wore the wedding ring was thin, so thin that the ring slipped when she moved her fingers. He touched it tenderly.

"Dear, are you sorry?"

"Sorry! For what?"

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"For all you left behind to marry a poor artist."

"We leave nothing behind when we gain happiness. Don't you think I 'd rather be here to-night with you, than to have the money without you?"

Katherine's father had proved himself the equal if not the superior of any stern parent in fiction. A stormy scene followed the announcement of her determination to marry the man of her own choice, rather than his, so they had slipped away to Milwaukee—that haven of the fond and foolish—and set up housekeeping immediately on their return.

Robert had objected a little to the announcement cards, since they were not in a position to entertain, but they were sent out. Upon the receipt of his, Katherine's father had written a single line: "Any time you may repent of this foolishness, your home is open to you."

The avalanche of gifts had followed the wedding instead of preceding it. The usual miscellany of the very rich had been showered upon them, and Katherine had often thought of the exquisite irony involved in the possession of gold candlesticks, real laces, a Royal

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Worcester chocolate set, and a genuine Corot, while her shoes were out at the toes and Robert's clothes were sadly frayed.

Still, eight months had passed and she had not repented of her foolishness." He still seemed more desirable than money, and she looked fondly at the Corot which hung in the place of honour.

"I cleaned all the silver to-day," he said, "and put our cut glass punch bowl safely out of Mickey's reach."

She patted his cheek affectionately.

"You're a dear good boy, and an admirable housekeeper."

"Katherine, I can't stand it any longer," he blurted out. "I simply won't stay here and paint while you work your dear fingers to the bone in that confounded old office. It 's my business to take care of you, not yours of me, and here you are, working like a slave, while I do the elegant leisure at home. It 's simply infamous!"

"Hubby, dear," and Katherine's tone was commanding. "I won't let you abuse yourself like that. In the first place you are working just as hard as I am, with your painting and keeping things cosy here, and accomplishing just as much. And it 's only for a little while. As soon as

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your picture is done, you 'll sell it, and I 'll resign and do the housekeeping myself. You know how gladly you would do the same for me; why won't you let me do it for you? Don't you love me well enough to let me help you?"

"Katherine! Katherine!" he cried, "don't say that! Don't question my love for you."

"I don't, dear heart, nor should you question mine for you."

. . . . . .

Long after Katherine had gone to bed, he lay on the rug and watched the fire. Outside, cold, gray Michigan beat against the North Shore with the sound of the sea. In these last days of despondency the lake had grown into a companion with seeming sympathy for every mood of his. The vast expanse of water seemed to broaden his horizon. Whenever he looked at it, it suggested a letting-go of all but the vital things. There was only one thing that was vital, and she slept in the little room beyond. Even his art counted for nothing beside her, but she believed in it, and he must make something of it to please her. The shadows deepened until even the gold candlesticks

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ceased to shine, and he went to the window. Slow, sombre, and restless, old Michigan chafed against the shore. At times those cold arms beckoned him with compelling strength, and it was so to-night. Katherine would go home to her father, and, in time, forget him. He pulled down the shade, shuddering as he did so, and at last fell asleep with a consciousness of utter defeat.

. . . . . .

"It 's busy I am these days. Misther Carroll, do be afther wantin' to paint me."

"Paint you, Carrot-Top! And thin may the blessed saints injuce him to make the hid of yez, some other colour."

"Ah, go on wid yez! What is the likes of yez to know about art?"

It was Mickey in the yard below, blarneying with the milk boy. The voices awoke Carroll, and he discovered it was very late, indeed, and that Katherine had gone down-town without waking him. There was a line pinned to the cushion: "Good-bye, dearest. K."

Mickey appeared at the back door while he was finishing his breakfast. With unheard-of kindness, she offered to put

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things right in the studio, and he left her in charge with some misgivings. But the marketing had to be done, and it would be impossible to work rightly without a breath of fresh air.

When he returned every chair was set demurely and properly against the wall and Mickey sat on the floor with his cherished portfolio of Gibson pictures in her lap. He repressed an angry exclamation, and ordered her, somewhat sternly, to put them back.

She complied readily. "It 's cross yez are this morning, Misther Carroll. Thim pictures ain't got no paint on 'em, but I 'm thinkin' they do be better wans than thim ye 're afther makin'!"

Carroll made no reply. It was quite true that the Gibson pictures were better than his, even without paint, but he did not relish her impartial announcement of the fact.

The light was good, and he worked steadily for an hour, at the end of which time Mickey announced the necessity for her immediate departure. In vain he protested and pleaded. The picture was nearly done, and only a few more sittings would be needed. But Mickey

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was "goin' to the theayter wid a coosin—" and she went.

So he put the house in order and decided he would make a cake for supper. He had never done anything of the kind, and Katherine found him still deep in the problem when she returned. He could n't find the cook-book, he said, so he just threw a few things in, the way she did when she made cake. It was going to be light too, for he had put in half a cupful of baking powder. Katherine laughed until the tears rolled down her cheeks. It was a mean woman, Robert said, who would go down-town and leave her husband with no cook-book! She pointed it out to him on the corner of the shelf, and he twisted his mustache thoughtfully, forgetting the flour with which his hand was covered. It took them both to make him presentable again, and then Katherine threw the cake away, and in a very few minutes made the lightest, most wonderful biscuit that ever gave a man the dyspepsia.

Mickey was faithful during the following week, and the "Aurora" was finished almost to his satisfaction. It was placed on sale in a Wabash Avenue gallery, and they anxiously watched the newspapers

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for notices. None came, however, and Robert became despondent. An idea came to Katherine, and she went with fear and trembling to the art critic of the *Express*, whose judgment was accepted as law and gospel.

Unlike most women she came to the point at once: "Mr. Lester," she said, "my husband has a picture on exhibition at Stanley & Brown's, and a favourable notice would mean much to us both. None of the papers have spoken of it, and I have been wondering if you could not help us a little."

Philosophers have not yet determined why a woman feels free to ask anything of a rejected lover, nor why men so willingly grant favours to women whom they have loved in vain.

"Mrs. Carroll," Lester replied, "I should be only too glad to be of service to either you or your husband, but I have seen the picture, and I cannot conscientiously speak favourably of it. In fact, I had written a roast, and out of consideration to you burned it up."

Katherine's face fell and her eyes filled. He was afraid she was going to cry, and he went on—"But I 'll tell you what I

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will do. I am called out of the city to-morrow, and it is the day for my notes; I 'll ask Carleton to let you do my work. You can write what you please."

She clutched the friendly straw gladly. "You are very, very good. But please tell me what is the matter with the picture."

"Only one thing, Mrs. Carroll; it lacks humanity. Pictures must be painted from a human standpoint. No doubt you will see what I mean if you will look at it critically. I have n't time to stop any longer now, but I 'll tell Carleton."

An hour later, Katherine was summoned to the office of the managing editor. "Mrs. Carroll," he said, "Lester tells me he is called out of the city and suggests you as the proper person to do his work. I believe it is a little out of your line, but you can try. Miss Scott will do your department to-day, and you can take this afternoon to look around."

So the newly fledged art critic went out to find her copy. There were several pictures to be noted and she spoke as kindly as she could of all, trying to mingle helpful criticism with discerning praise. None were condemned, for she knew what

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a picture might mean to the artist, and to the woman who loved him.

Unconsciously, she imitated Lester's style; his full, well-rounded periods, and sharp, incisive sentences. Very different it was from the chatty, gossipy way in which she filled the "Woman's Kingdom," on the back page of the *Express*.

She was afraid to say too much of Robert's work, and toned down her enthusiasm three successive times. The last note satisfied her and she sent it up-stairs with the rest.

When the paper came in the morning, he turned feverishly to the page which contained the "Art of the Week." His shout of joy woke Katherine and together they laughed and cried over the "good notice."

She felt wicked, but his pleasure was full compensation for her pangs of conscience. "Lester's approval is worth a thousand dollars," he said. "I can go to work in earnest now."

Her face changed mysteriously. An overwhelming sense of the wrong she had done, came upon her, and he looked at her steadily. There was a queer note in his voice when he spoke: "Katherine Carroll, I believe you wrote that notice."

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It was useless to dissemble longer and she told the whole story. He was deeply touched by this proof of her devotion, but he shook his head sadly over Lester's own comment.

"It won't help any, little girl; you can't make fame for me in that way. My work must stand or fall on its own merits—and—it seems likely to fall."

She tried to comfort him, but he put her away. "No, it 's all wrong. I 'm going to give it up, and try something else."

After she had gone, he put his easel and paints away, and set the house in order. Then he went into the city, as so many have done before, to find work, which seems little enough to ask in so great a world. At five he returned, utterly tired and cast down. He had tramped the streets for hours and had found absolutely nothing to do.

Half unconsciously, he turned to the window—to the vision of the lake which had meant strength before, but it brought only weakness now. "Come,—come—come—" the waves seemed to say—instead of being cold and cruel, they were promising infinite rest. And it meant a luxurious home for Katherine.

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His decision was quickly made, and he wrote a tender note to leave for her. He sobbed over that—for it was n't like painting—he was putting his heart into it. Then down to the inland sea he went, those impatient arms beckoning him still.

But Katherine had felt in the office that something was wrong with Robert. A pang of sudden fear made it impossible for her to work any longer, and she hurried home. She found the note at once, and seeing only the "good-bye" at the end she hastened to the door.

"Robert, Robert!" she called, but he was too far away to hear her. And Katherine ran, crying as she went, "Dear God, make me in time!"

He stood at the end of the pier, old and decayed as it was, and looked at the sea and sky for the last time. The sunset gates behind him, royally beautiful with purple and gold, seemed a glimpse of the heaven he hardly hoped to reach, for though he knew that God was infinitely merciful, he knew that He was also infinitely just. He took off his coat and laid it on the pier, just as Katherine, breathless, excited, her face tense with appeal, appeared beside him.

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His eyes lighted for a moment at the sight of her, then returned to their dull, hopeless look. "It 's no use, Katherine," he said unsteadily, "go back, darling."

"Not alone, dearest."

"Yes, Katherine," he kissed her sadly.

For minutes which seemed like hours, she stood there arguing, pleading, begging in vain. It was best for her—that was his one thought. He was a dull, dead weight upon her; it was right to make her free. And the blue arms beckoned still.

Suddenly she drew his face down to hers and whispered to him. What she said seemed to rouse him from himself.

"Really?"

"Yes, really. Can you leave me now?"

Something more than the glory of the sunset shone in Katherine's face as she stood between him and the water. She was subtly beautiful, with the infinite motherhood, which lives in every woman's heart, and as he looked at her, the shackles of his dead cowardly self fell away. A great resolve within him slowly swelled into a controlling power—he would be worthy of her who stood beside him, cost what it might. His voice was tender and caressing when he spoke again.

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"Leave you? No, Katherine, no."

They walked home together and spoke of other things. There was a stronger bond between them, and the water seemed cold and bitter now—very different from the eerie, half-human thing that had tempted him an hour ago.

He tossed restlessly through the night, thinking of what Lester had said about painting from a human standpoint. Perhaps he meant that he should paint men and women, instead of goddesses.

The vision of Katherine came into his mind as she stood with the blue water behind her and the sunset upon her face and hair; her eyes full of earthly longing, and more than earthly appeal. He would paint her like that, and he roused from his cowardly lethargy into high resolve.

Her salary was raised and she worked happily at the office, while Robert painted at home. In the evening she sat and sewed on tiny garments for the human secret, which spring was to reveal. He sat and looked at her, seldom speaking, content to watch the holy joy in her face, and either that or his coming fatherhood, sometimes thrilled him with a tenderness so great that his love was almost joy.

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The "Aurora" had been sold, not for a large sum, it is true, but for enough to take care of them both until the new picture should be finished. It was done at last and placed on sale. Painted from a human standpoint it undoubtedly was, and it drew many admirers but no purchaser. For four weeks it had been at the gallery and Robert began to grow despondent again.

A fall morning dawned, gray and dull, and the lake seemed to tremble with portent of coming disaster. At night the wind rose and lashed the water into seething foam. The sound of the storm made Katherine afraid, but she sank into a fitful slumber at last, while Robert kept a light in the window, hoping none were at sea.

But at half-past eleven there was a terrific rap at the door. It was Mickey, disheveled and breathless.

"There do be a wreck, Misther Carroll," she cried, "there 's sky-rockets goin' off and the life crew be ordered out, and I thought ye 'd be afther wantin' to see it."

The thing was evidently a circus for Mickey; we hold life so lightly at the age of sixteen.

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Katherine, trembling and afraid, was already at the door. She wrung her hands, crying piteously, "Oh, Robert! Robert! don't go."

"I must go, sweetheart, they may need me."

"Then I am going too." And she began to hurry into her clothes.

"Dress warmly, dear," he called.

"Yes, I will, and we must take some blankets with us."

Once outside they had no difficulty in locating the wreck. The northern sky was aflame with rockets, and people from all directions were hurrying northward.

The Northwestern University life crew was already on the beach trying to shoot a line to the sinking ship, half a mile from the shore. The boat had been ordered back, for it was certain death in such a sea. The fourth attempt was successful and a shout of joy went up, dimly heard above the storm.

Mickey danced about excitedly as they tied rope after rope of greater strength to the slender cord, that had been shot to the upper deck, but Katherine felt faint, even with her husband's arm around

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her, when they made preparations to pull the ship's life-boat ashore.

It required almost superhuman strength, but the rush of water westward aided them materially. Katherine never forgot that time of waiting—human lives on shore struggling to save the human lives at sea, and the tense cruel crash of the cold waves.

Lifted high upon an angry crest, the boat was dashed heavily upon the beach. The captain of the stranded vessel, eight seamen and one passenger, were helped out with eager hands.

The passenger was a middle-aged man, who appeared dignified and prosperous, in spite of his damp and disheveled condition. His first remark was in the nature of a recapitulation.

"Well, of all the excitin' trips!"

Robert and Katherine laughed in spite of themselves, and hastened to extend to the stranger the hospitality of their little home for the remainder of the night. It was barely one o'clock, and the Honourable Mr. Marchand accepted gladly, if not gratefully.

He trudged sturdily along in the blankets they had wrapped around him, disdaining Robert's proffered assistance, but once

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stretched out upon their couch before a blazing fire, he became much more tractable. He called for a glass of whiskey complaining that what he had been through would be enough to kill him if he did n't at once supply this long-felt want of the inner man. A telephone message to the nearest drug store brought the quart of stimulant he thought he needed for the night, and when he was comfortably filled with his favourite beverage, life began to assume a more pleasant aspect. He graphically told the story of the wreck to his interested listeners and then imbibed a little more liquid nourishment. After a while he remarked sagely—"It 's a lucky thing I did n 't go down, some folks would have lost millions."

"Is that so?" asked Katherine pleasantly.

"Yes, *millions!* Look here, young woman, did you ever hear of a syndicate?"

Katherine thought she had heard the word somewhere.

"Well, I 'm one of 'em!"

The whiskey was evidently getting in its work in the way of lubricating the tongue of the shipwrecked capitalist, and after waiting a moment, he continued:

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"I 'm on my way to Chicago to perfect a combine in—"and he astounded Katherine by unfolding the inside history of a daring and infamous combination—a gigantic steal, which if consummated, would change the ownership of millions. He named the leading conspirators, explained the vulnerable points in the scheme, and gleefully boasted of his own skill and diplomacy.

He finally fell asleep, but not until Katherine had got all the necessary points concerning the outrageous robbery which had been so adroitly planned.

Robert met her at the door. "Got a scoop?"

"Well, I should say so. A big one too!"

"How do you know it is true?"

"*In vino veritas*," whispered Katherine. "Besides, Carleton told one of our night men the other day, that promotion was in store for the fellow who 'got on to' any of the schemes of this new syndicate." She had heard so much newspaper slang that her lapse from the grammatical standard was perhaps pardonable.

Until nearly three o'clock she wrote hurriedly a description of the wreck, and also of the new "combine," Robert dozing in an

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easy chair meanwhile. She woke him up to give him her manuscript. "To the telegraph office, quick! It 'll be in time for the city edition."

The Honourable Mr. Marchand slept late the next morning, and Katherine sent word to the office that she could not come until the next day. About noon, however, their guest took his departure, apparently but little the worse for his vivid night's experience. At a corner he bought a copy of the morning's *Express* and shortly thereafter leaned up against a wall for support. "Gee whiz!" The Honourable Mr. Marchand mopped his brow and read the startling headlines again. "Might as well go back to Cincinnati and Cleveland and Toronto, and all them towns I 've just come from! Wonder how in thunder the thing ever got out!"

He strolled down Wabash Avenue to collect his scattered thoughts, and stopped half mechanically, to look into Stanley & Brown's window. Carroll's painting stared him full in the face, and a great light broke in upon him.

"That 's her! That 's the girl what done it! Blamed if I don't like her for it!"

That afternoon a messenger boy rapped

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at the studio door with a letter from the *Express* office for Katherine.

"Dear Mrs. Carroll," it ran, "we think you deserve a two weeks' vacation at full salary which is now double the former sum, and we beg you to accept the enlosed check as a slight testimonial of our gratitude for the biggest scoop of the year. Please report for duty on the eighteenth, and be ready to take the exchange editor's desk."

She was dazed. "Two weeks' vacation, double salary, promotion, and——"

Robert picked it up, it was a check for two hundred dollars.

During the jubilation which followed, a telegraph boy pounded vigorously at the door, but he might as well have kept still, since his efforts were unheard. Finally he opened it, and utterly unabashed by the spectacle of a gentleman kissing a lady, and the lady seeming to enjoy it, he fairly shrieked: "TELEGRAM."

Katherine vanished instantly, and Carroll read the despatch.

"Picture sold for highest price. Purchaser unknown.

"STANLEY & BROWN."

The mythical "quail on toast" became

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a reality that night, and the house seemed far too small to hold so much exuberant joy. In the morning, they went together to Stanley & Brown's to collect the picture money, and start a "really truly bank account," as Katherine said.

The firm was quite at a loss to know who the purchaser was, as he took the picture away with him in a carriage, and paid cash instead of by check, but the man who helped him put it on the back seat of the carriage reported that he had muttered to himself, as he was climbing in: "That's her! That's the girl what done it!" This may have given Mr. and Mrs. Carroll some clue to the identity of the unknown benefactor.

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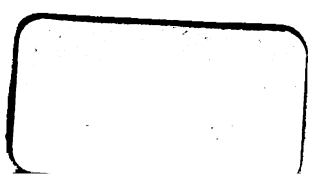

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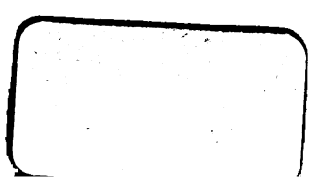

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